The Miners of the West of Scotland and their Trade Unions 1842-74

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Contents

Supplementary, detailed source references for strikes referred to in Tables 22-31 are contained in a pocket on the back cover of this thesis.

Preface

The miners of the West of Scotland who are the subjects of this thesis were those who worked in the coal and iron mines of Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and parts of Dunbartonshire and Stirlingshire, the mines, in other words, of the Clyde Valley from its source to the sea. In the text the terms West of Scotland, West Central Scotland and Clyde Valley are virtually inter-changeable since they denote the same mining region. This delineation of the West of Scotland differs somewhat from that of the nineteenth century Mines Inspectors who for administrative purposes divided the Lanarkshire coalfield in two and included East Lanarkshire in the territory of the inspector for East Scotland. That division had no meaning economically and has no value for the purposes of this thesis.

The period 1842-74 has a certain unity in that it began with a strike and ended with a strike. The 1842 dispute was on an unprecedented scale and marked the beginning of a new period of combination among the miners. In 1874 the strike was even more extensive but because of its failure it was followed by several years of declining trade unionism in the mining industry of the West of Scotland. The year 1874 was a turning point for two other reasons; the first effects of the 'Great Depression' were being felt in the industry and Alexander McDonald the most prominent Clyde Valley miners' leader went South of the Border to become a Member of Parliament. For these reasons 1874 was the end of an era in the history of mining in the West of Scotland.

Several abbreviations are used in the text of the thesis and in the notes for each chapter. They are as follows:

A.S.E. - Amalgamated Society of Engineers

EcHR - Economic History Review

G.U.L. - Glasgow University Library

N.L.S. - National Library of Scotland

SHR - Scottish Historical Review

S.R.A. - Strathclyde Regional Archive

S.R.O. - Scottish Record Office

T.U.C. - Trades Union Congress

The command numbers of Parliamentary Papers are cited in the Chapter notes in brackets after the title and date of each Paper.

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Thesis Summary

Against the background of an expanding mining industry dominated particularly by the iron trade and with ironmasters as the most substantial employers, a mining population emerged which was rapidly recruited from many parts of the United Kingdom with a particularly high proportion of Irish workers. Although the coalface workers required some skill and experience they could have no real claim to artisan status when new workers were being introduced and learning the job so quickly. During the period unemployment was never a problem.

Production increased but not productivity as miners tended to reduce output when wages were high, and vice versa. Wages fluctuated frequently mainly because of the movements in iron prices,producing the most regular disputes in the mining industry. The miners' sense of grievance about wages was increased by employers' deductions, weighing methods and the use of truck.

Mining communities, some urban others more rural, produced a spirit of solidarity through institutions like friendly societies which assisted the growths of trade unions by providing organisational experience for potential leaders. Housing conditions and the provision of schools varied from community to community and were often used by employers as means of controlling their workers for example by evicting strikers from company houses.

A structure of district miners' unions had emerged in the West of Scotland before 1842 but it assumed a new strength in the strike of that year and in the events of subsequent years. Several districts gave support to the Miners' Association in 1843-4 and the Holytown district attached itself to the National Association for United Trades in 1845-6. These district unions went into decline several times during the following

years but it was always the same organisational structure which was revived when the occasion demanded, often led by the same men, like William Cloughan, John Muir or Thomas Hailstones.

Their policies were also consistent during these years based upon an acceptance that pig iron prices could control wage levels. Restricted output and strikes were the most frequent responses of the miners to their industrial grievances. The year by year fluctuations in union activity continued throughout our period with the same basic organisation and policies. Further attempts at national organisation were made in 1855 with Alexander McDonald's Scottish Union of Coal and Ironstone Miners (which he revived in 1862) and with the Miners' National Association formed in England in 1863. But these unions were built upon established district organisations which had been involved for years in collaboration at county and at Scottish level. From the mid-fifties more substantial union funds were raised and more emphasis was put on securing improved working conditions through Parliamentary legislation. The union also sought in the sixties and early seventies to provide friendly society benefits for its members and generally to approximate more closely to the 'new model' style of unions.

The leaders who emerged tended to have similar views about the value of restricting output, about the need for restraint and effective organisation of strikes and about the importance of unions being peaceful, law-abiding and 'respectable'. These attitudes were reflected in the rules which were formulated for several of the district and national unions of the period. These rules dealt with size of committees, functions of office-bearers and organisation of finance. As unions aspired to provide friendly society benefits in the sixties,finance became more complex and subscriptions higher.

The rules also included provisions for control of members including regulation of entry into mining, a feature of union organisation which was

diminishing by 1874, but which had not disappeared

Despite the leaders' professed caution about striking the miners withdrew their labour regularly throughout the period, sometimes in large, district or regional strikes, but more often in small one pit turn-outs. These were usually caused by wage demands which had been turned down or by wage cuts. Although more than half of the large strikes failed most of the smaller ones were successful, especially those in support of wage rise demands. This success was achieved in spite of employers' policies of eviction, lock-out or dismissal of union leaders.

Among the other industrial policies which the miners adopted were restricted output (used most often when wages were high or rising), pressure for Parliamentary legislation, emigration, legal action against employers and the vague aspiration to finance co-operatively owned mines.

Chapter One

The Location and Ownership of the Mines of the West of Scotland 1842-74.

Several historians have described the growth in the nineteenth century of the coal and iron industries in the West of Scotland.[1] It is not the purpose of this chapter to reiterate their findings but rather to examine the aspects of that story which are most relevant to the miners and their attempts at trade unionism. Changes in location and growing numbers of mines will be considered first. The industry during this period was expanding overall but not at a uniform rate throughout the Clyde Valley region. As new mines were opened older mines were being worked out and as new mining districts grew older districts stagnated. This expansion and shifting location necessitated a growing but mobile mining population.

Mine ownership rested with a wide variety of men including land-owning gentry, entrepreneurs and ironmasters. Their varying attitudes and interests will be discussed with particular reference to their effects on industrial relations. Just as ownership took several different forms so too did mine management, another feature of the industry whose influence on the miners will be examined.

A final purpose of this chapter will be to consider the principal developments in mining technology during the period and their effects on miners' working conditions and attitudes.

Location of Mines

By 1842 mining operations were already quite widely extended over North Lanarkshire, particularly in the parishes of Old and New Monkland, that is in and around Coatbridge and Airdrie and a few miles south around the village of Holytown in the parish of Bothwell.[2] The rapid growth in these areas in the eighteen thirties followed the adoption of J.B.

Neilson's celebrated hot blast process of iron manufacture.[3] These and other mining centres referred to hereafter are located on the map in Figure 1 in the Appendix. The other mining districts of Lanarkshire in 1842 included Govan,[4] Shotts, Coltness near Wishaw, Carluke, Cambuslang,[5] Quarter near Hamilton with several small collieries in the parishes of Dalserf and Lesmahagow.[6] The thirteen ironworks in the county (of which seven were in the Monklands[7]) used a great deal of the coal and ironstone produced from these mines.

In Ayrshire coal mining was described in 1842 as being 'extensively diffused, being worked in the parishes of Kilbirnie, Dalry, Kilwinning, Stevenston, Irvine, Dreghorn, Kilmarnock, Galston, Riccarton, Dundonald, Mauchline, Muirkirk, St. Quivox, Ayr, Coylton, Cumnock and Daily (sic)'.[8] Unlike Lanarkshire, mining in these areas had not grown rapidly, indeed there had been little change in either the numbers or locations of Ayrshire mines since the late eighteenth century.[9] The Kilmarnock and Kilwinning-Irvine areas produced most coal because each had a rail link to a port, Kilmarnock to Troon (since 1812) and Kilwinning to Ardrossan (since 1827)[10]. Lack of such transport facilities had hindered expansion in the other mining districts. As yet iron mining and manufacture in Ayrshire were limited in scope in 1842, there being only a few furnaces near Dalry, Muirkirk and Galston.[11] Others were under construction, however, and growth was to be particularly rapid in the forties.

Compared to Lanarkshire and Ayrshire there was little mining elsewhere in the West of Scotland. In Dunbartonshire it was confined to Kirkintilloch, Jordanhill and Knightswood and in Renfrewshire to Johnstone and Hurlet.[12] In West Stirlingshire there were a few mines at Campsie.[13]

We have no comprehensive figures for the distribution of collieries until 1854. Table 1 shows the growth and fluctuations of numbers of

collieries thereafter and (roughly) their location. No indication is given of the size of each of these works. A colliery might employ only a handful of men or several hundreds. For that reason these figures can give only a general impression of the extent of mining in the region.

In Ayrshire four large mining districts are seen to be emerging, in contrast to 1842 when collieries were 'extensively diffused'. The building in the forties of the main Ayrshire railway lines had been followed by swift development of mining.[14] As in 1842 the two predominant districts were Kilmarnock and Kilwinning-Irvine. The former stretched from Galston down the Irvine valley through Kilmarnock to Gatehead, a distance of about nine miles. In the other district in 1854 mines stretched from Kilbirnie down the Garnock valley for over twelve miles through Dalry and Kilwinning to Stevenston and Irvine.[15] It can be seen from Table 1 that the number of collieries around Kilmarnock grew particularly rapidly in the years 1854-65 whereas in the Kilwinning-Dalry-Irvine district growth came rather later.

The scattered district of Cumnock-Muirkirk stretched over thirteen miles of the county, from Muirkirk through Lugar, Auchinleck and Cumnock to New Cumnock. Apart from a sudden increase in 1863 and 1864 the collieries here did not grow as quickly after 1854 as in the two more northerly districts. The same may be said of the Ayr-Dalmellington part of the county which was some twelve miles in diameter. There was no significant growth of collieries there during the two decades before 1874. In the Kilmarnock, Cumnock-Muirkirk and Ayr-Dalmellington districts then, most growth took place during the 'forties and 'fifties. From 1855 until 1874 the numbers of collieries fluctuated in all of these areas but the overall increase was only eight. This was equal to the growth in numbers in the fourth district, Dalry-Irvine, in the corresponding period.

This pattern of rapid growth in the 'forties and early 'fifties which slows up and fluctuates during the sixties can be seen from Table 1 to have been repeated in some other mining districts of the Clyde Valley, for example Glasgow, Rutherglen, Shettleston, Baillieston and Dunbartonshire. Most of the mines shown in these districts in 1854 had appeared since 1842. In Lanarkshire mining was still most intensive in 1854 in the Coatbridge-Airdrie-Holytown triangle, as it had been since the thirties. Even here numbers fluctuated and growth between 1854 and 1874 was relatively slow, relative that is to what had gone before. In Coatbridge the total number of collieries dropped by one over those twenty years.

Perhaps the most significant growth areas in Lanarkshire in 1854 were Motherwell, Wishaw and Hamilton. Mines had been opened up there at a quite spectacular rate since 1842 when there had only been a handful. But here the rate of growth did not slow up or fluctuate as it did elsewhere in the sixties. Expansion was particularly notable in the Hamilton-Lesmahagow area which contained Hamilton, Larkhall, Carluke, Carnwath, Lesmahagow and Douglas spread over fifteen miles up the Clyde Valley. It even included some of the figures for Shotts parish before 1870. Within this district, however, the largest number of collieries and the fastest growth were around Hamilton and Larkhall which were within five miles of one another. By 1874 the distribution was as follows [16] -

Hamilton	20	collieries
Dalserf parish (including Larkhall)	15	"
Carluke	8	"
Carnwath	7	"
Lesmahagow	7	"
Douglas	4	"

Hamilton and Larkhall were only five miles from Motherwell and Wishaw so that the area covered by these four towns contained seventy

three collieries by 1874. This was now slightly more than in the Monklands district which could no longer be described as the only hub of mining in Lanarkshire. There were now, so to speak, two hubs.

The other three relevant counties in the Clyde Valley clearly remained less important in coal mining although mines increased in all three. The mines in West Stirlingshire were scattered from Bannockburn to Kilsyth. In Dunbartonshire they stretched from Knightswood to Duntocher and in Renfrewshire from Johnstone to Pollockshaws.[17]

The fluctuations between 1854 and 1874 in total numbers of collieries for the whole Clyde Valley are quite marked as Table 1 shows. There was an increase of forty three from 1854 to 1857, a drop of fifteen from 1857 to 1859, a rise of seventy from 1859 to 1866, a drop of fifty two from 1866 to 1870 and a rise of 114 from 1871 to 1874. An examination of the annual lists of collieries shows that these fluctuations were not caused by temporary closures of works which were to reopen a few years later.[18] Substantial numbers of them were being closed permanently and even more new ones were being opened. Table 2 shows just how high was the 'turnover' of collieries between 1854 and 1874. We can see that in Ayrshire of the seventy eight in existence in 1854, thirty were to close down by 1874, a closure rate of almost forty per cent. In Lanarkshire the proportion was almost forty four per cent. For the whole Clyde Valley region forty two per cent of the 1854 collieries closed by 1874. Some districts had a higher proportion of closures than this, notably Ayr-Dalmellington and Airdrie. On the other hand in Dalry-Irvine, only thirty per cent closed after 1854, in Kilmarnock less than twenty per cent and in Wishaw-Motherwell almost thirty two per cent. Collieries in these three districts had a higher than average survival rate.

Many more new collieries were replacing the old ones and the figures in Table 2 for collieries opened between 1854 and 1874 when related to the totals for 1874 shows that the industry was quite dynamic at this time.

They show, for example, that in Ayrshire fifty five per cent of the collieries in 1874 had been opened in the previous twenty years while in Lanarkshire an even higher proportion, sixty eight per cent, had been opened during the same period. For the whole region the proportion of new collieries was about sixty per cent.

The districts with the lowest percentages of new collieries were Kilmarnock, Glasgow-Rutherglen and Coatbridge. Those with the highest were Ayr-Dalmellington, Airdrie, Hamilton-Lesmahagow and Renfrewshire. The industry was not as static in Ayr-Dalmellington and Airdrie as the figures on Table 1 seemed to indicate. Instead there was a high rate of 'turnover' of collieries as old ones closed more new ones opened. Districts like Kilmarnock, Glasgow-Rutherglen and Coatbridge emerge as the most stable (or static) in terms of numbers and survival of mines whereas Hamilton, Lesmahagow and to a lesser extent Wishaw-Motherwell, Dalry-Irvine and Baillieston were the most dynamic. These last districts had particularly high proportions of new collieries compared to numbers closed and to numbers opened before 1854.

These fluctuations were caused by the cyclical movements of the coal trade in Scotland. Professor Youngson has suggested that between 1854 and 1874 there were three peak years in demand and prices 1857, 1864 and 1872-3 and two trough years 1861 and 1869.[19] Comparing these fluctuations in the state of the coal trade with those of numbers of collieries a rough correlation emerges as follows -

Peak years	State of coal trade	1857	1864	1872-3
	Number of collieries	1857	1866	1874
Trough years	State of coal trade	1858-61	1869	
	Number of collieries	1859-61	1871	

As trade improved it seems more collieries were opened and conversely a decline in trade was followed by numerous pit closures. After the trade fluctuations of 1864, 1869 and 1872-3 there was a time

lag of almost two years before colliery figures reached a peak or trough. The totals on Table 1 show that in each of these years colliery figures had been following the trend of trade until then, climbing in 1864, falling in 1869 and climbing in 1872-3. The time lag is explained partly by the time that it took to open a new colliery. An enterprise which was initiated at a time of brisk trade might not become operative until after the trade peak had passed. The Cadzow Coal Company, for example, first began to issue shares in 1872,[20] a peak year. It was 1874, however, before the existence of Cadzow Colliery, Hamilton, was first recorded. Even then it was not yet productive but merely 'sinking'.[21] Similarly while mines were closing before and during the trough year of 1869 it would take up to a year before the poor state of trade forced some others to close. As trade began to improve in 1870-1 and confidence increased so new enterprises were begun. Figures remained constant in 1870 and 1871 and began to climb again in 1872.

The coal trade in the Clyde Valley suffered quite severe fluctuations in part because of its dependence on the pig iron industry and so fluctuations in prices of warrants in the Glasgow Pig Iron Market correspond roughly to those of the coal trade.[22] Numbers of ironstone mines in the West of Scotland therefore were presumably affected by the state of trade just as numbers of collieries were. Statistics of ironstone mines, however, are not available in such detail as those for collieries. Table 1 shows numbers of ironstone mines in 1874. Comparing these with our information about 1842 mines a rough pattern can be discerned. In 1842 there were very few ironstone mines in Ayrshire[23] but by 1874 there were forty six. In Lanarkshire numbers in some districts were probably declining over the period. As early as 1842 in Old Monkland, for example, some ironstone pits had already been worked out.[24] In that year ten mines were working in the parish, but by 1874 there were none. The proportion of ironstone to coal mines in Ayrshire

was particularly high compared to the rest of the region. For every ironstone mine in Ayrshire there were 2.3 coal mines in 1874. In Lanarkshire the ratio was 1:5 and in the whole Clyde Valley it was 1:3.2.

An expanding and mobile labour force was a pre-requisite for most of the developments already described in this chapter. Growing and fluctuating numbers of mines, large numbers of pit closures and larger numbers of new openings, static numbers of mines in some areas, rapid growth in others, decline of iron mining in Lanarkshire and its growth in Ayrshire; conditions like these forced large numbers of miners to be constantly on the move. The overall growth also drew large numbers of men into the industry. This mobility and growth of labour force were to make the organisation of the miners difficult. But it has been seen that the need for mobility and the opportunities for growth varied from district to district and from year to year during the period 1842-1874. These variations in time and place were also to affect trade unionism and industrial relations among the miners.

Mine Ownership

Industrial relations also depended on the mine-owners, on the extent of their mine-owning interests, on the purpose for which they wanted the coal or iron and on how they chose to manage their businesses.

Several of the West of Scotland mining operations were owned by members of the landowning class, the county gentry (or aristocracy) who saw mining as a potentially profitable venture for their estates. Lands like those of the Duke of Portland near Kilmarnock, the Duke of Hamilton around Cambuslang, Dalserf, Hamilton and Lesmahagow,[25] Lord Belhaven at Wishaw and Hon. T.C. Kennedy at Dalquharran in Ayrshire were rich in minerals and yielded substantial profits. Since the beginning of the century, however, and throughout this period landowners tended more often to lease the mining rights of their land to coalmasters or ironmasters.

By 1874 for example this had become the policy of the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Belhaven.[26] While the terms of the leases and the rents and royalties varied they usually provided a rich income for the landowner. In addition to the three already mentioned the West of Scotland landowners who were receiving over £1,000 per annum for mining rents and royalties included James Houldsworth of Wishaw, D.C. Carrick-Buchanan of Drumpellier, J.C.C. Hamilton of Dalzell, the Earl of Eglinton and Captain Wm. Blair of Blair in Ayrshire.[27]

How did this affect industrial relations? It has been argued that under the old 'feudal' landowners the work-force was more settled, that this continuity ended when a colliery changed hands and that migration of some miners and their families followed.[28] According to the Commissioner on the Mining Population, Seymour Tremenheere, the Duke of Portland had particularly good labour relations at his colliery near Kilmarnock because of his provision of good housing and a school.[29] But any generalisation about these owners would be open to argument. Lord Belhaven, for example, did not fit into this pattern of the benign employer. The ferocity with which he used the Lanarkshire Yeomanry to quell miners' strikes in 1842 and 1856 can hardly have made for harmonious relations with his employees.[30] Nor was the Duke of Hamilton a model employer. His mineral accounts for the eighteen thirties and 'forties show that as a result of the weighing system in each of his collieries the miners produced a large amount of coal for which they were not paid.[31]

These landowners were, however, a minority among mine-owners in the Clyde Valley. A very high proportion of the mines belonged to iron-masters because the pig iron industry consumed a high proportion of Scottish coal. In 1854 32.3 per cent of coal produced in Scotland went into the iron industry and by 1870 the figure was 48 per cent.[32] In Table 3 colliery numbers are used to compare ownership by ironmasters and coalmasters in 1854, 1864 and 1874. In 1854 Lanarkshire ironmasters

owned three collieries for every four owned by coalmasters whereas in Ayrshire the ratio was about 1:2. By 1874 in Lanarkshire the ironmasters were down to two collieries for every five of the coalmasters', whereas in Ayrshire the ratio had risen to 3:5. Of the ironstone mines in the Clyde Valley all but nineteen in East Lanarkshire in 1874 belonged to ironmasters.[33] By adding the 1874 figures for these mines given in Table 1 to the ironmasters' totals for 1874 in Table 3 (remembering to deduct nineteen from the Lanarkshire ironstone mines) a clearer impression emerges of the ironmasters' dominance in so far as numbers of mines is a valid guide. In Ayrshire they owned eighty seven compared to sixty seven belonging to coalmasters. In Lanarkshire it was 115 for ironmasters and 201 for coalmasters.

In some districts the ironmasters were particularly powerful in this respect between 1854 and 1874, for example in Cumnock-Muirkirk, Glasgow, Rutherglen, Coatbridge and Holytown. By 1874 they were also predominant in Dalry-Irvine, Ayr-Dalmellington, Motherwell-Wishaw and in Renfrewshire, Dunbartonshire and West Stirlingshire.

These men were relatively few in number and some of them owned numerous collieries. Table 4 shows this county by county and district by district. The ironmasters' predominance in Dalry-Irvine was in fact the predominance of two large companies, Merry and Cunninghame and the Eglinton Iron Company belonging to Bairds of Gartsherrie. The latter company had almost absolute control of Cumnock-Muirkirk and the Dalmellington Iron Company had similar power in Ayr-Dalmellington district.

In Lanarkshire by comparison there were fewer examples of large districts dominated by one or two ironmasters. The Bairds had extensive operations in Coatbridge as had the Glasgow Iron Company and the Coltness Iron Company by 1874 in Motherwell-Wishaw but without the predominance which existed in the Ayrshire districts mentioned. There were smaller communities in Lanarkshire, however, which were dominated by ironmasters.

Quarter, for example, near Hamilton had all its mines in the hands of Colin Dunlop while Calderbank near Airdrie was under the Monkland Iron and Steel Company and Govan was the domain of William Dixon. But in general the most substantial Lanarkshire ironmasters had collieries and iron mines in several parts of the county. Dixons for example had them in five districts, Bairds in four and Wilson's or the Summerlee Iron Company in four. The largest of these companies had other works elsewhere in the Clyde Valley, such as Bairds' numerous mines in West Stirlingshire.

A comparison of the numbers of collieries belonging to the largest ironmasters is made in Table 5. It is almost a 'league' table showing the companies in approximate order of extent of ownership. One striking point which emerges is the predominance of Bairds whose collieries and iron mines were in all parts of the Clyde Valley and whose interests were expanding throughout the period. Merry and Cunninghame came second, another company with interests in most parts of the region. Next come Wilson and Company who had had several collieries in Ayrshire in 1854. By 1864 most of these had been sold to Bairds and by 1874 the remnant of the company, still substantial,was limited to Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire under the name of the Summerlee Iron Company. Although the remaining companies in Table 5 seem small by comparison each was a major employer of labour.

The relative power of each of these ironmasters is best realised when Table 5 is compared to Table 6 which shows numbers of collieries owned by the main coalmasters in 1874. It shows that apart from Finnie in Ayrshire, no other coalmaster was comparable in colliery ownership to any of the ironmasters in Table 5, coal-mining companies being more numerous and much smaller concerns than most iron companies.

Throughout most of this period few mine-owning concerns became joint-stock companies. Most of the capital was raised privately in a family

as in the case of the Bairds or in a partnership like that of Merry and Cunninghame.[34] One exception to this was the Shotts Iron Company, a large joint-stock company with numerous mines in West and East Scotland. During 1872 and 1873 three of the leading iron firms were incorporated as companies, Merry and Cunninghame, Dixons and the Blochairn Iron Company. During these same years seven new coal companies were incorporated in the West of Scotland.[35] For most of the period up to 1874, then, control of each of the companies involved in mining rested with a few people. Even the joint-stock companies of 1872-3 limited the numbers of shareholders by issuing shares in large denominations.[36] The ironmasters and the few comparable coalmasters were powerful, independent entrepreneurs.

Competition among them all was intense at times. The Scottish ironmaster of the second quarter of the nineteenth century has been described as the 'embodiment of the analytic entrepreneur', ploughing back his profits into the business, expanding his firm's productive capacity, and being actively involved in the industry himself.[37] Something similar may be said of some coalmasters. The Duke of Hamilton, for example, in the years before 1854 re-invested substantial sums from his Mineral Account into trial borings in various districts in which he had land in North Lanarkshire, sinking and fitting new collieries, building colliers' houses and railway tracks.[38] After 1854 he continued to test, sink and fit new collieries, but then leased them to ironmasters like Colin Dunlop and to coalmasters like Archibald Russell.[39]

These entrepreneurial virtues among the mine-owners, the size of some of the companies and the competition among them all influenced their relations with their miners. It has been suggested, for example, that although the ironmasters were in many respects successful business administrators they were short-sighted in their attitudes to labour. In times of falling iron prices it was always in wages that the first

expenditure cuts were made although wages did not rise correspondingly quickly when prices rose.[40] Since iron prices fluctuated frequently throughout this period so therefore did miners' wages and this was to become the most important single cause of unrest in the industry. The miners had several other grievances such as truck stores, weighing methods and inadequate ventilation which will be considered in more detail in subsequent chapters. Although all of these policies may have had the objective of maximising profits and increasing competitiveness they contributed to the hostility of many West of Scotland miners towards their employers.

The largest companies had great power over their work force because of the number of mines they possessed. In some instances this gave them control of employment for miners in an entire village or town, such as Dunlop's control in Quarter or the Eglinton Iron Company's control in Cumnock and Muirkirk. Any 'troublesome' miners in these communities would have to move to another town before they could find alternative employers. Such was the extent of the Bairds' 'empire' that the Works Manager at Gartsherrie could and often did send letters to contractors in Bairds' other collieries advising them of strikers who were not to be given employment. In some cases a list of names was given.[41]

There were occasions, on the other hand, when the extensive power of ironmasters simply caused more extensive industrial strife. The strike of 1860, for example, at William Dixon's mines at Bishopbriggs quickly spread to Dixon's other mines at Govan and Carfin. Collective action emerged among the company's miners which brought the entire Dixon enterprises to a standstill for almost ten weeks.[42] The miners employed by Dunlop at Quarter and at Clyde Iron Works used similar co-operative tactics against their employer by striking simultaneously to obtain a wage increase in August and September 1862 and again in September and October of 1864.[43]

The intense competition between mine owners was often the cause of strikes at times when miners were demanding a wage increase. On a number of occasions in Lanarkshire when miners' deputations went to several employers asking for higher wages, the reply from each employer was that he was willing to give the increase but could not be first to make the concession. The miners' policy in reply to that was to choose one colliery by ballot and organise a strike there to force that owner to grant the rise. The other masters would then give similar increases. This was the cause, for example, of a week's strike at Davidson's colliery Wishaw in September 1859.[44]

The fluctuating price of pig iron combined with the constant competition to create a particularly bitter divergence of interests between ironmasters and coalmasters. When iron prices dropped ironmasters cut miners' wages but the coalmasters did not always have to follow suit. The result was often a strike of the miners employed by ironmasters demanding wages equal to those of the coalmasters' miners. Examples of this type of strike took place in Airdrie and Coatbridge in April-July 1850 an in Kilmarnock in 1855 and 1863.[45] Such was the rivalry between iron and coalmasters that the latter sometimes employed miners who were on strike or locked out from ironmasters' collieries. This happened during a long and extensive strike and lock-out in Ayrshire and Renfrewshire in January and February 1860.[46]

Colliery Management

The efficiency and competitiveness of a mine and relations with the work force often depended on the manager. The owner of a single mine might take its management into his own hands but more generally a man with what was considered to be appropriate ability and experience was employed as manager. He was usually assisted by one or more foremen or oversmen (or overmen)[47] who were often recruited from the working miners. Seymour Tremenheere interviewed several oversmen who had once

been colliers.[48] The advantages of this arrangement from the owner's point of view are clear. A working miner had special knowledge and expertise which were important for someone in management. He would also be able, presumably, to understand the miners, to communicate with them and therefore to control them more successfully than an 'outsider' from another background or environment.

For the promoted miner there were problems. He usually had to relinquish his class loyalties and become an agent of the employer. The men interviewed by Tremenheere for example, were sharp in their criticisms of the miners and especially of their industrial action. The most notable exception to this rule was Alexander McDonald. Having worked down mines since the age of eight he eventually reached the position of oversman in an ironstone mine belonging to Addie's Langloan Iron Company.[49] But far from severing his links with ordinary miners he was to become their most influential leader.

The powers and responsibilities of a mine manager varied, depending upon the employer. He was responsible for supervising the work of the mine, making a regular report to the owner about output and expenditure[50] recruiting labour[51] and along with oversmen and firemen, making and implementing safety regulations in the mine.[52]

In many instances managers became involved in negotiations with miners about grievances and especially about wages. This was a frequent responsibility of managers employed by ironmasters like Dixons, Coltness Iron Company and Summerlee Iron Company.[53] A tactless or unpopular manager could therefore find himself in the firing line in an industrial dispute. William Barr, for example, manager of Merryton Colliery Larkhall belonging to Messrs. Cochrane and Brand was reported to have spurned a request by his miners for a wage increase with the comment that 'he would see crows picking flesh from their bones first'.[54] A strike followed, accompanied by some very acrimonious correspondence in local

newspapers about the remark, which Barr denied having made. Several managers employed by Merry and Cunninghame proved particularly controversial in their dealings with miners. In June 1862 the managers of some of the company's ironstone mines in Ayrshire disputed the miners' right to appoint 'justicemen' to supervise coal weighing at the pithead, a right granted by law to miners in the Mines Act of 1860.[55] In two cases the justicemen were forced from the pithead and in one of these mines a strike followed.[56] The manager of Merry and Cunninghame's Inkerman colliery at Johnstone caused a six week strike by trying to enforce a ruling that miners must cut their own pit props or accept a wage reduction.[57] The power of managers of Shotts Iron Company mines to appoint a resident surgeon and run the works friendly society led to complaints from the miners in 1852. Four men were dismissed for 'simply expressing their convictions of truth that the managers ought not to intermeddle with affairs which belong exclusively to the working men'.[58]

The fact that the manager was responsible along with oversmen and firemen for the safety of the miners at work could be used by the owners to escape legal liability in the event of an accident. This happened in the case of Wilson v Merry and Cunninghame which went before several courts over a period of three years from 1865 to 1867 and finally reached the House of Lords in 1868. Mrs. Wilson was the widow of a miner killed in one of Merry and Cunninghame's pits. The ultimate outcome was that the company were not held responsible since the responsibility was the manager's.[59] Alexander McDonald argued that all the owners then had to do was to set up 'men of straw' and 'dunderheads' as managers and use them as scapegoats. McDonald was later to argue for the need for training and qualifications for mine managers.[60] The Mines and Collieries Act of 1872 established what McDonald had been suggesting and rigorous examinations for managers were set up.[61]

Another system of mine management which produced, in proportion to its extent, much more resentment from the miners was that of paying a contractor to run the mine. This was more common in Staffordshire than anywhere else in Britain. There it was known as the 'butty' system and involved 'the workmen being servants, not of the proprietor or lessee of the colliery, but of a contractor . . . who engages with the proprietor . . . to deliver the coal or ironstone at so much the ton himself hiring the labourers requisite'.[62] This system seems to have emerged principally because of the lack of adequately trained and educated managers at a time and in an area of rapid expansion of mining. The owners needed to find men who could control what seemed a turbulent work force and since the contractors were paid according to their output there was a strong incentive to force maximum productivity from the miners.[63]

Bairds of Gartsherrie were the largest mine-owners to use this sub-contracting system in the West of Scotland. Apart from them it is not clear how many other owners used contractors. Alexander McDonald was vague about its extent in 1866. 'Under the large firm of Messrs. Bairds it is common' he said ' and with a number more also'.[64] Even as late as 1892 there was uncertainty about how widely contractors were used in the Clyde Valley. Three representatives of the miners, Keir Hardie from Ayrshire, Robert Smellie from Larkhall and William Small from Blantyre all testified then to the extensive use of sub-contracting in their areas. Robert Baird, on the other hand, an employer and secretary of the Lanarkshire Coal Masters Association said 'It is only to a limited extent that sub-contracting is carried on with us'. But he could give no figures.[65] In some cases the sub-contracting was only partial with contractors employed to work only parts of a mine. This was probably the system to which Hardie, Smellie and Small were referring in 1892.

As operated by Messrs. Baird the sub-contract system provided the owners with middle-men who took many responsibilities but who also had

to act on company instructions. They could hire labour, for example, but on some occasions were forbidden to employ certain men. A letter from the Works Manager to all contractors in August 1863 read

> 'We are desirous that none of the men at present on strike at Blackhill, Keilhill, Kenmure, Possil and Wester Common should be employed by you'.[66]

These contractors ran the mines but they also had to obey and enforce company rules. William Mitchell, contractor at Gartsherrie No. 1 Pit was reprimanded by the Works Manager in 1866 for permitting miners to start work late.

> 'We beg to remind you of the letter of 4th inst. as to your not allowing the men to descend to their work in your pit after 6 a.m. You will please see that the rule be rigidly enforced after Monday'.[67]

Even rules governing Bairds' company houses had to be enforced by the contractors.[68] The rows of these houses were known, almost to within living memory, by the names of the contractors who controlled them, e.g. 'O'Neil's Road'.[69] Bairds also used contractors as intermediaries between themselves and the miners in matters concerning wages. The contractors had to announce changes in wages which had been decided by the company.[70]

All of this meant that there was little need for direct contact between owners and miners. In so far as contractors were felt to be a barrier between the two their presence often embittered industrial relations. During the widespread strike of 1842, for example, there were several vague allegations by miners and by the press that contractors were to blame for ill feeling and for some miners' grievances. Relations would be improved, it was felt, if the masters were to deal

directly with the miners.[71] Alexander McDonald in 1866 and Keir Hardie and Robert Smellie in 1892 all claimed that contractors, in trying to increase output often ill-treated miners and neglected safety regulations.[72] Grievances against contractors caused a number of strikes at Bairds' mines in Ayrshire as when a contractor called Hamilton at a Dalry mine tried in 1852 to increase the size of the hutches which the miners filled without increasing their wages.[73] In Dalry again in 1856 the contractor of Bairds' No. 4 Pit, Peter Bennie, caused a particularly bitter strike. He first refused to make any allowance in paying drawers (who hauled coal from the coal face to the shaft) for the ever-increasing length of road along which they had to pull their loads. They had to continue to haul twenty four hutches per day. Then he stopped giving an extra payment to miners for cleaning dirt from the coal.[74] One miner commented 'One thing surprises me much, that the above honourable gentlemen (Bairds) would allow any contractor below them to trample upon the rights and privileges of the men as allowed by themselves'.[75] This deference towards owners but contempt for contractors may have been convenient for a firm like Bairds for it was on the contractors' heads that the miners' hostility fell which might otherwise have been aimed at the owners.

Just as Merry and Cunninghame might be said to have used managers as scapegoats in matters of liability for accidents, so the same may be said of Bairds' use of contractors. In response to an inquiry in 1853 about an accident in a Gartsherrie pit David Wallace, one of Bairds' chief secretaries, wrote to the Procurator Fiscal of Airdrie -

> 'We are not responsible for the workers in the pit to which you refer and have sent your letter to the contractor James Wilson who is responsible for all accidents.'[76]

Miners often regarded contractors and managers with equal suspicion. Both were criticised by Alexander McDonald for abuse of their powers or

negligence, especially where pit safety was concerned. An earlier spokesman of the miners, Septimus Davis who had been a miners' union leader in the North East of England in the forties complained in 1851 about mining conditions in Scotland. 'There is not a mining district in the United Kingdom' he proclaimed 'where the miners are so badly managed and so much under the influence of petty contractors and tyrannical oversmen'.[77] This was probably an over-statement, particularly his reference to contractors. But the fact that he lumped together managers, contractors and oversmen shows that the distinction between them did not seem to be important to him and he seemed to be blaming them and not the owners for the miners' grievances.

Some Changes in Mining Technology

Scottish mine-owners have been criticised for their apparent failure to develop mining technology further than they did. Even the great ironmasters who had once epitomised the entrepreneurial virtues became increasingly short-sighted towards technological innovation in the second half of the century.[78] It has also been suggested that the structure of the British mining industry in which there were so many small companies militated against innovation which required large capital investments with risks of loss.[79] But the period was by no means devoid of improvements in mining.

One of the most fruitful technical developments at that time was the sinking of mines to greater depths. This was made possible by high pressure steam winding engines for raising the coal to the surface. The first of these was working in Airdrie in 1841. Wire ropes began to replace hemp ones on winding gear after 1840.[80] By 1867 the East of Scotland Mines Inspector observed that 'winding engines with double cylinders and drums of large diameter on the crankshaft instead of intermediate shafts and gearing are now extensively used'.[81] The power of these winding engines was constantly being increased and while

175 horsepower was considered impressive in the forties, by the eighties they had reached 1500 horse power.[82]

Improved methods of trial boring and growing knowledge of geology revealed new deep seams of coal in parts of Lanarkshire, especially around Hamilton, Blantyre and Bothwell in the sixties. Most of the collieries opened in these areas in the years before 1874 were among the deepest in the West of Scotland. Blantyre colliery, for example, belonging to Messrs. Dixon was 780 feet deep. Orbiston and Hattonrigg collieries at Bellshill belonging to the Mossend Iron Company were 810 feet in depth. The only comprehensive figures about pit depths in the West of Scotland are for East Lanarkshire. Using the depths of the downcast shafts (i.e. the shafts down which fresh air was drawn into the pits) as a measure of depth of pits, Table 7 summarises the figures. They show that of the 344 pits in East Lanarkshire (most collieries had more than one pit) more than half, 183, were over 200 feet in depth. Most of these, however, were between 200 and 500 feet. The very deep pits like Blantyre and Orbiston were still exceptional and a very substantial number were still relatively shallow ranging from twelve feet to 199 feet.

This affected miners' working conditions for deeper mines are warmer and usually drier than shallow ones. The thicker seams in the deep mines in Lanarkshire made for easier working conditions and higher productivity.[83] But on the other hand ventilation was more difficult in a deep mine.

The safety as well as the efficiency of the miners depended on ventilation. Each pit had two shafts, a downcast where fresh air was drawn in from the surface and an upcast from which used air was ejected. The most common form of ventilation in West of Scotland mines during the nineteenth century was by means of a furnace which was situated near the bottom of the upcast shaft. Warm air from the furnace rose up the

upcast thus sucking air along the underground roads towards it. This had the effect of drawing fresh air down the downcast shaft. The flow of air in the mine was controlled by dividing areas off with wooden partitions or bratticing and using wooden trap doors as entrances from one part of the mine to another. While this method worked fairly efficiently it had serious drawbacks. The flow of air was less easy to regulate in a shallow mine or one with sloping roads and levels. There was also a danger of the bratticing catching fire in the event of an explosion. The upcast shaft had also to be used for mine traffic, but filled as it was with smoke and rising hot air it caused great discomfort and inconvenience. There was finally the danger of the furnace exploding it dangerous gases came into contact with it.[84] Despite these problems ventilation by furnace was by far the most widely used system during this period. Of the 169 collieries in East Lanarkshire in 1873, 138 had furnaces, as did all of the 44 ironstone mines. Of the remaining collieries eleven simply used natural ventilation, eleven used steam jets to force air to circulate and in only nine collieries were machine-driven fans used.[85]

Underground haulage of minerals was seen to be improving by the sixties, particularly with the use of steam engines. The Mines Inspector for the East of Scotland observed that 'haulage by engine power on underground inclines is more frequently adopted . . . Horses are also more generally used for underground haulage instead of men and boys'.[86] But there was virtually no mechanisation or other technical improvement applied at the coal-face. This must be seen as one of the principal short-comings of the industry and its owners and yet coal production did increase during our period. Figures for coal output are only available from 1856 and even then there are discrepancies. Table 8 gives the West of Scotland Mines Inspector's version of production statistics along with those of a contemporary writer and observer of

several mines and in some cases dominated whole communities. Their wage policies and their competition with coal-masters produced frequent industrial disputes.

Managers and oversmen often had the responsibility for handling industrial relations and here again disputes were caused by tactless or unpopular measures. The same can be said about contractors although they appear to have been used by only a few large employers.

Although the enterprise of larger mineowners has been commended their willingness to undertake technological improvement was limited. Some improvements in pit-sinking, winding-gear, ventilation and underground transportation were introduced but coal-hewing remained untouched by modern technology. The growth in coal production of the period was therefore the result of the opening of new collieries rather than the improvement of existing ones.

the coal industry, Richard Meade.[87] As always East Lanarkshire was included in the report of the East Scotland Mines Inspector and he only gave output figures for that area separately from 1864, and then not every year. The figures quoted by the West Scotland Inspector for each year up to 1865 were his estimates based on returns from mine-owners which were sometimes incomplete. Hence the difference between his figures and those of Meade up to 1865. However vague the figures are they give the impression of output which was growing but which was uneven and unspectacular in the West of Scotland. The Inspector's figures in particular show very little overall increase during the eighteen sixties. This confirms one of the impressions given in Table 1 and discussed earlier in this chapter of the industry being almost static during the sixties but growing more rapidly from 1872.

East Lanarkshire by contrast achieved an increase of almost 90 per cent in output in the ten years from 1864 to 1874. This seems to have been mainly the result of the opening up of the new deeper collieries in Hamilton and Bothwell parishes.[88] By 1874 East Lanarkshire was producing more coal than the rest of the West of Scotland. Apart from the opening of these new collieries the general increase was also partly the result of the technological innovations especially the improvements in steam-powered winding gear.

Conclusions

Coal and ironstone mining expanded in the Clyde Valley throughout our period but more rapidly during the forties and fifties than thereafter. The process of expansion was an uneven one involving closures of old mines and the opening of many more new ones all of which caused the work-force to grow but to be mobile.

Although the industry was growing mine ownership was usually confined to individuals or small groups, often families, rather than to joint stock companies. The most powerful owners were ironmasters most of whom owned

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Chapter Two

The Miners' Work

Mining has always been regarded as a uniquely difficult, dangerous and at times degrading type of work, involving a unique type of labour force whose attitudes to their employers and industrial relations in general have been strongly affected by the nature of their work. Attempts at trade unionism and forms of industrial action such as strikes were influenced by the miners' attitudes to their work and by the peculiar kind of working community which arose from the nature of the work. The first part of this chapter will describe the working conditions of Clyde Valley miners in the middle of the nineteenth century, the principal methods of mining and the degree of autonomy which they gave the miners. The difficulties and dangers of the work will be examined together with fatal accident statistics which showed some improvement in safety standards during the period.

In part two there will be examination of the miners' working hours and the main reasons for their limitation such as the men's dislike for their work and desire for more leisure, the exhausting nature of the job and above all the policy of restricting output to keep prices and wages high. As a result of this it will be shown in an examination of productivity that miners' output per man per year fluctuated frequently.

Working Conditions

Throughout this chapter the term 'miner' is being used in a general sense to denote all underground workers in coal or ironstone thus covering a wide range of tasks. In addition to the hewers (i.e. colliers or ironstone miners) who dug the mineral, there were drawers and putters who took it from the working face to the shaft or to the terminus of the haulage road. From there drivers took it in pony-drawn carts to the shaft. There were also brushers who removed parts of the roof or pavement

of the tunnels, perhaps by blasting, in order to heighten the roadway. The reddsmen attended to the underground roads, removing falls of mineral and keeping them clear. Doorkeepers or trappers opened and shut the trap doors which regulated the flow of air. The bottomers were responsible for the loading and unloading cages at the bottom of the shaft.[1]

The most prestigious of all underground work was that of the hewer, the man who cut and dug the coal or ironstone. His was a difficult, exhausting job using simple tools: a pick, shovel, hammer and borer. Apart from the increased use of gunpowder, there was very little application of technology to coalface work in the West of Scotland during the nineteenth century. A few attempts were made to devise coal-cutting machines but none had any lasting success.[2] The hewer was nearly always working in an awkward and cramped position. He had to weild his pick while crouching or even lying prostrate. The work was described by James Barrowman who had managed and surveyed several mines in Lanarkshire during the period.

> 'When in the act of undercutting . . . the coal for the purpose of dislodging it from its bed, the collier reclines with his shoulder resting on his bent up leg, so as to allow his arm free play when wielding the pick . . . In some cases where the seam is very thin, the collier has to lie at length . . . I have surveyed a coal working, the seam of which was so thin that a broad-shouldered miner had to cut a place in the pavement for his shoulder before he began to hole the coal.'[3]

These conditions varied, often depending on the method of mineral working used in the mine. As in other British coalfields, the two methods used at that time in the Clyde Valley were stoop-and-room and long-wall. The former and more traditional method, known in England as room-and-pillar, was described by a Wishaw mine manager, Thomas Borland.

> 'Stoop-and-room is generally the system adopted of working out thick seams of coal. By it, stoops (or pillars) are formed twelve yards square and upwards, according as the depth from the surface varies and the working places are usually from six to twelve feet wide.'[4]

The plan on Figure 2 shows the lay-out of a stoop-and-room mine with a network of roads around the large square pillars of coal. The narrow separate working faces are shown at the edge of the mine. This method of working had important implications for the organisation of the work-force in the mine. Since each working place was so small only one or two miners could work there, cutting, digging and filling the coal into hutches to be hauled away by a drawer. Each of these small teams worked at their own speed, independent of the rest of the workforce. They carried out the total job of hewing the coal without any major division of labour and above all they were free of supervision because in most cases it was physically impossible for an oversman to be present to watch the miners at work in such small working areas.[5]

Several sociologists have suggested that these working conditions gave the miners such a high degree of 'responsible autonomy' that they saw themselves almost as artisans.[6] They had to perform a range of different tasks, namely boring, blasting, undercutting, hewing, digging, filling and setting props. With these tasks went a number of skills which miners gained with experience. For example they had to know where to undercut the coal and where to bore for blasting. Even the job of digging and filling the mineral into hutches required judgement as impurities had to be separated from the rest of the output. Prop setting required judgement in knowing where to position them. Throughout their work miners constantly relied on their ability to sense danger, for example from roof falls or the presence of gas.[7] Above all the ability to do such heavy work in cramped and awkward positions such as that described earlier by Barrowman required considerable experience.

The ironmaster William Dixon testified in 1834 that because of these awkward working positions for coal hewing 'a considerable degree of practice is required and that beginning in early life'.[8] Thus he preferred to employ native-born Scots of mining families who had trained since boyhood at the coal face.

Miners also had this independence at the coal face of which they were often fiercely jealous. The American sociologist Carter L. Goodrich quoted a miners' agent in Lanarkshire in the late nineteenth century as saying that the oversman never saw the men working. Whenever an oversman approached the coal face they stopped and waited until he went away again because they would not let anybody watch them.[9] Independence of mind was felt by some miners to be a characteristic feature of the mining population. Thomas Stewart who had been a miner in Larkhall, Lanarkshire for thirty years in the middle nineteenth century claimed it was the miner's most important virtue.

> 'The principal trait in the character of the miner is unyielding independence. He will suffer persecution to the uttermost ere he will yield an inch of what he consider his rights. Avaricious coal and iron masters for their own interests have described him as a greedy turbulent discontented character.'[10]

Miners who thought of themselves as skilled artisans were, however, quite deluded as a strong fit man could learn the job in a few weeks. During the eighteen forties, fifties and sixties as the industry expanded in the West of Scotland and new mines were opened new labour was recruited rapidly from many parts of Scotland and Ireland. It is well known that at times of strikes employers would sometimes take on new hands with little or no training to keep production going.[11] This newly recruited labour would naturally take a long time to become as efficient as men who had been miners all their lives with all their skills. The mining labour force grew rapidly, however, between 1841 and 1871 in the West of Scotland.

The totals were as follows.

Number of Miners in West of Scotland

1841 - 14,568

1851 - 31,121

1861 - 38,256

1871 - 46,645

Such a rapid rate of growth with numbers more than doubling in the decade 1841-51 and trebling over the whole thirty years 1841-71, indicates that recruitment of labour was easy and that only a minority of miners can have been raised in the work from childhood or youth.

In spite of the fact that their job could be learned relatively quickly by large numbers of newly recruited workers many miners retained the pride and independence of skilled artisans. This was to be seen in some features of the organisation of their early trade unions in the nineteenth century. For example most miners' unions of the West of Scotland between 1817 and 1874 had rules which sought to control entry to mining, giving preference to miners' sons, prohibiting boys under ten to work underground and providing for a graduated increase of work status and rights between the ages of ten and sixteen.[12] Most of these early unions emphasised that their aim was to protect rights and privileges - very much the aim of a craft union. From the point of view of the miners' leader Alexander McDonald, the appropriate reference group for miners was the engineers, that is the group with whom the miners should compare themselves and whose standards and values they should emulate.[13] These points will be discussed more fully in later chapters when this aspiration to attain status will be examined in the context of union organisation, industrial action and leaders' attitudes.

The social psychology of men working in small groups of two or three such as miners in stoop-and-room mines has also been the subject of some study. While the members of such small groups would seem to find

difficulty in combining in larger groups like factory departments they are nevertheless capable of group consciousness on a much larger scale at the level for example of a colliery or a village.[14] This may help to explain why mining communities have reputations and traditions of collectivist actions and attitudes which were stronger than in any other occupational group in Britain. This may also be seen in the miners' frequent attempts to form trade unions and to take collective industrial action like striking or limited output. They made these attempts more often and with more success during the middle decades of the ninteenth century than any other comparative 'unskilled' occupational group in the Clyde Valley.

Longwall mining, the other method in operation at that period was described by G.M. Bailes a mining engineer of the later nineteenth century.

> 'In longwall working the coal is all extracted at one operation, the face of work being in one continuous line . . . the roof settling down as the face advances . . . Gate roads are carried through the setting roof at regular intervals. The distance apart of the gate roads . . . depends on the condition of the seam and the custom of the district. Where the seam is of good height and yields coal well, and the face advances rapidly by every-day work, thirty to fifty yards gives good results'.[15]

Figure 3 shows the plan of a longwall mine with long stretches of coal face, gate roads at regular intervals leading to the face and areas of subsided roof between those roads. The length of face between the gate roads varied considerably and Bailes' estimate of thirty to fifty yards was probably the maximum length in any Clyde Valley mines before 1874. Most longwall faces were shorter than that at that period. But however short the faces this system clearly meant quite different working conditions for miners compared to those in stoop and room. They were at a longer face which they had to keep advancing in line with others

if possible. Their work could now be more easily supervised than in the limited and cramped working spaces of stoop-and-room mines. Bailes pointed out that from the employers' point of view this was one of the main advantages of longwall mining.[16]

For the working miners, however, the advantages of the method were not so clear. Gone was their responsible autonomy because of the more uniform working rate and closer supervision. They often had to work in bigger teams something which stoop-and-room miners would find difficult, which in turn led to more division of labour at the coal face. This was because there was enough room for some to dig and fill the coal while others were cutting and hewing. The satisfaction of doing the total job and exercising different skills was therefore lost. The working teams were nevertheless often small in number. At Old Hall pit in Auchenheath Colliery near Lesmahagow, for example, the miners were paid in small teams of two or three or, at the most four, often father and son or sons. Braidholm Pit in the same colliery was bigger and more productive and there the men were paid in groups of five, six or seven.[17] Both of these pits were described by the Mines Inspector as longwall but they were both comparatively small. At Old Hall there were only twenty two coal face workers and at Braidholm there were eighty five. They do illustrate, however, how the size of working teams in longwall mines could vary during this period of transition and gradual introduction of the longwall method. But even allowing for variations in numbers in working teams this system did make it more difficult for miners to cling to the old illusion of having the status of artisans.

During this period longwall was being introduced quite rapidly in some parts of the West of Scotland. Figures are first available in 1873 for East Lanarkshire that is that part of the county which fell into the territory of the Mines Inspector for the East of Scotland. It included the mining parishes of New Monkland, Bothwell, Hamilton, Dalzell,

Cambusnethan and Carluke. In 1873 the number of coal mines in that part of Lanarkshire was 169 of which eighty seven were worked on the longwall system, sixty nine on stoop-and-room and the remaining thirteen used a combination of both. All of the forty four ironstone mines in the area were of the longwall type.[18] It would probably be wrong to assume that the same proportion of longwall to stoop-and-room existed in other parts of the West of Scotland since East Lanarkshire and especially Hamilton, Bothwell and Dalzell parishes included many of the most modern mines in the region in 1873. The older mines elsewhere in the West of Scotland were probably predominantly of the stoop-and-room variety. Nevertheless the growing numbers of longwall mines at that period coinciding as it did with phenomenal growth in numbers of miners and recruitment of untrained labour must have had a profound effect on the attitudes of those miners who thought of themselves as artisans. This period of transition in methods combined with growth of labour force produced a new type of miner with new attitudes to his work, to industrial relations and eventually to trade unionism. Thus the form of miners' union which emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century was to prove quite different from the artisan style of unions which will be seen to have been constantly rising and falling during this mid nineteenth century period.

Irrespective of the methods of mining used there can be little doubt that most miners disliked their work. It was not easy to enjoy working in darkness and in difficult physical conditions. Thomas Stewart of Larkhall described his constant reluctance to leave the open air to go down the mine.

> 'There is the smiling sun and the blue summer sky and oh! how gladsome and glorious they seem when we are on the verge of losing them again, and oh! we are 'laith tae lea them' for the foul damp suffocating air of the mine to wade amid the mud and mist with nothing but the lazy looking yellow flame of the miners' lamp to cheer us'.[19]

David Wingate a miner-turned-poet of the period who was born in Renfrewshire and worked in several Lanarkshire mines at this period composed his own version of 'The Song of the Shirt' entitling it 'A Song of King Coal'. In the third verse he describes the miners' work.

'Dig - dig - dig,
Till the labouring bosom heaves,
As each clogged lung expands in pain
With the poison it receives.
Hole and tumble and draw,
Crawl and sweat and gasp,
Till the pick becomes an unwieldy weight
In the toil-enfeebled grasp'.[20]

May Keir felt pangs of regret when her son James Keir Hardie began work in 1866 down a Lanarkshire coal mine, regret which many mothers must have felt about their sons' involvement in this dangerous and degrading work.[21]

There were a few happier aspects of the miner's work such as the strong personal friendships which arose in the mine. Miners' reminicences usually include some funny stories about their work, for example about pit ponies which learned to draw the cork from a miner's flask and drink his tea,[22] or about pithead 'fuddles' or drinking parties.[23] But by far the most frequent of miners' anecdotes are of pain, death and sadness. For most miners there was little pleasure to be had in the job.

The dangers to life and health were naturally what miners feared and disliked most about their work. The most frequent causes of death in a pit were falls of roof or walls or coal-faces. These accounted for almost half of the lives lost. Accidents in the shafts when cages or men fell down all or part of the depth of the shaft came next in the order of fatalities. Explosions, usually of firedamp, caused almost one in eight of the deaths. The Report of the Mines Inspector for the

West of Scotland (i.e. excluding East Lanarkshire) for the period 1856 - 1874 give yearly figures of fatal accidents which produce the following totals for the whole eighteen years.

Total Deaths in West of Scotland Collieries 1856-1874

from Explosions	102
from Falls of Roof etc.	424
from Shaft accidents	177
from Miscellaneous causes	100
TOTAL	803

Roof falls were more frequent in stoop-and-room mines[24] because there the roofs were supported over a period of years by pillars of coal which were constantly deteriorating and by wooden pit props. The Mines Inspector for East Scotland observed more than once that the stoop-and-room mines in East Lanarkshire around Wishaw had a particularly high accident rate.[25]

Scottish mines in general were thought to be less 'gassy' than those in England and the death rate from explosions was continually lower in Scottish mines. One firedamp explosion (firedamp being the name given to methane gas found in some Scottish mines) could cause the deaths of many miners. Some precautions were taken especially after the Mines Act of 1850.[26] These were colliery rules enforcing the use of safety lamps. Firemen checked the mine workings for gas each morning before the miners went down. The Mines Inspectors were appointed to inspect safety regulations in all the coalfields. In addition to these statutory measures new methods of ventilation were constantly being tried.

In spite of precautions, inspection and improvements explosions caused numerous deaths in mines in the Clyde Valley as the figures quoted above show. The biggest explosion in the period was in 1851, before Mines Inspectors' figures began, at Victoria Colliery, Nitshill in Renfrewshire

where sixty one men and boys were killed, the cause being defective ventilation.[27] In July 1849 eighteen men were killed at Commonhead Colliery Airdrie.[28] Although these were two of the deadliest pit explosions in the area before 1874 they were of course minor disasters compared to the Blantyre explosion of October 1877 when over two hundred miners were killed.

While the carelessness of miners in using naked flames was often blamed for explosions, the failure of mine owners to take adequate precautions and to use efficient ventilation systems frequently embittered the miners.[29] The demand for improved ventilation was a regular point in the speeches of Alexander McDonald. He was particularly critical of clause 3 of the Mines Inspection Act of 1860[30] whereby miners were to inspect mine workings for gas after the fireman's inspection, thus taking responsibility for explosions from the employers.[31] A case which McDonald claimed exemplified mineowners' negligence and evasion of responsibility was that of Wilson V. Merry and Cunninghame. The owners of Haughhead Colliery near Hamilton had their manager held responsible for an explosion which caused the death of a young collier named Wilson. The case went as far as the House of Lords where it was decided that the owners were not responsible and had to pay no compensation as was mentioned in Chapter One.[32]

Shaft accidents were also felt by Mines Inspectors to be arising often from miners' carelessness or from inadequate safety precautions and they tried with some success to reduce the number of such accidents. In the West of Scotland for the five years up to 1860 out of 105 lives lost, 61 were in shaft accidents. Whereas for the five years ending in 1874 of 106 lives lost forty four were in shafts.[33]

Table 9 shows the annual numbers of deaths in collieries in the West of Scotland. It gives a comparison of East Lanarkshire with the rest of the region and shows that while in the years following 1856 the death rate

of the industry around Hamilton, Larkhall and Wishaw.

In Ayrshire the forties saw a particularly marked proportional increase so that by 1851 there were more than three times as many miners in the county as there had been in 1841. The growth in Renfrewshire, Dunbartonshire and Stirlingshire in the same decade was of a much lower order.

Although there was a general increase in numbers in each decade it is shown in Table 14 that the increase was among colliers whereas there was a decrease of ironstone miners between 1861 and 1871. This latter category were somewhat disadvantaged compared to most of their coal mining brethren, firstly because they were all employed by ironmasters whose power and control of their workforce has already been described. Their second weakness was the direct dependence of their wages on the price of pig iron which meant lower wages occasionally than those of colliers. Because of these disadvantages ironstone miners were a relatively depressed section of the workforce and slower to become involved in trade unionism. In Ayrshire they constituted about twenty five per cent of the mining population by 1871 while in Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire the proportion was almost fifty per cent and in Lanarkshire the proportion was much lower. When Alexander McDonald made one of his frequent trips from Holytown in Lanarkshire to Paisley in 1861 he made a point of criticising Renfrewshire ironstone miners for their lack of action and agitation about wages, contrasting their inactivity with the struggles of Lanarkshire miners.[1]

This burgeoning mining population in the West of Scotland was just a part of the general growth in the region with industrial expansion attracting immigrant workers from all parts of the United Kingdom and particularly from Ireland. Table 15 shows that Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire had a higher ratio of Irish to native-born population than was the average for Scotland in 1861 and 1871, much

was lower in East Lanarkshire from about 1866 onwards the two areas were almost equal in annual fatalities. These figures have to be set against the growing numbers of colliers and the rising production figures as is done in Table 10. The number of colliers in Table 10 (except for 1853) is taken from the printed Census reports for each of these years. The totals for 1861 and 1871 are approximate because in each case there was a significant number of miners who were described as unspecified, i.e. of coal or iron or some other mineral. The total numbers of colliers, however, are very unlikely to be less than those given. The total for 1853 is my estimate assuming an average annual increase of about 200 colliers in the region between 1851 and 1861. The production figures are extracted from Table 8 where it will be seen that 1865 is the earliest year for which production figures for East Lanarkshire as well as the rest of the Clyde Valley are available. The numbers of deaths for 1861, 1865 and 1871 are given as five-yearly averages because using the totals for single years would distort the calculation if the total for any year is exceptionally high or low.

These figures show a clearly discernible decline in the death rate during the period. The death ratios for 1853, 1861 and 1871 show this improvement in relation to the numbers of colliers, and then for 1865 and 1871 in relation to production in the region. It seems clear that this improvement can be attributed partly to the extended and growing influence of Mines Inspectors, partly to technical improvement (in ventilation for example) and partly to legislative change which enforced stricter safety precautions. It has to be added however that even with these improvements the 1871 figure of one death for every 461 colliers represents a very high death rate for accidents at work and is an indication of the level of danger involved in the miners' daily work.

Unfortunately there are virtually no comparable figures for non-fatal accidents among miners of the region. It is safe to assume, however,

that the number of injuries arising from accidents would be much higher than the death rate except perhaps in major disasters caused by firedamp explosions. Thus the miner lived not just in constant fear of death at his work but perhaps equally in fear of injury which would temporarily or permanently prevent him from working and earning. Miners were not killed or injured only by pit accidents, their unhealthy working conditions sometimes wet, sometimes dusty and often physically cramped produced many illnesses and a death rate which was much higher than that of the rest of the male population. Lung diseases such as bronchitis and silicosis were well known as occupational hazards of mining causing infirmity and death particularly among older miners. Because of their work miners had a low resistance to many other illnesses. Although figures for the West of Scotland are not available, it has been shown that in England and Wales in the mid nineteenth century the annual death rate per thousand miners from causes other than accidents was 17.3 whereas for the male working population as a whole it was 15.1 The death rate among miners from diseases was fourteen per cent higher than the average.[34] Presumably in the West of Scotland the figures could be similar.

It has been seen that union leaders like Alexander McDonald blamed mine owners for inadequate ventilation and for failure to give compensation after accidents but he also said in 1868 that miners' working conditions had improved significantly in his lifetime. When he was asked to what he attributed these improvements he replied that trade union action had been important. 'The progress of civilisation has had a great deal to do with it but the combinations of the men from time to time have had much more to do with it: The state of things which I have described has brought about strikes innumerable'.[35] He claimed that improved safety and legislation for increased inspection of mines resulted from union agitation and was carried out in the face of opposition from mine owners.[36] The safety and working conditions of miners were, he

said, issues which often embittered industrial relations and which produced frequent combinations, agitation and strikes among the miners.

The fact that the miners' social and economic security was in constant jeopardy also influenced trade union policy so that many attempts at unionisation in the Clyde Valley had as a central aim the provision of welfare or 'friendly' benefits such as payments to injured miners or to the widows of miners killed at work. In addition to this most mining communities had friendly societies formed to meet the particular needs of miners. Their organisation will be outlined in Chapter Four.[37]

Working Hours and Productivity

Throughout this period most West of Scotland miners worked not more than ten days per fortnight, often less.[38] A tradition grew at that time of having a weekly or fortnightly 'holiday', usually a Thursday, when the pits would stand idle and meetings of miners were often held organised by the union.[39] This was part of a general policy of Clyde Valley miners of restricting their output, one of their main weapons in industrial struggles with employers. It is another example of the miners' previously mentioned independent attitude that they took days off work irrespective of the wishes of their employers. Most employers seem to have resigned themselves to this apparent waywardness of their workers. Even the most authoritarian employers, Bairds of Gartsherrie, acknowledged that on the Monday following a Saturday when the miners were given their monthly pay there would be nobody reporting for work. David Wallace, the general manager of Gartsherrie wrote to a local firm in September 1855.

> 'Saturday first is the pay for Gartsherrie No. 1 and as usual the boilers will be off on Monday and the pit idle'.[40]

In addition to these unofficial 'holidays' there was usually only one official one in the year for miners in the region and that was New Year. Work stopped at the end of the day on 31 December and the miners

did not begin to reappear at work until 3, 4 or 5 January and here again some miners seem to have taken an extra day or two off work. This was the case at Dixon's Govan collieries, another company which was known to be strict in its discipline of the work force.[41]

The number of working hours of miners was also affected by their independence of spirit. As part of their policy of restriction they frequently limited their 'darg' that is their day's output. It has been already seen that miners in stoop-and-room mines had considerable autonomy over own work, especially over their rate of work. It was, however, rather difficult for miners to control the number of hours they spent underground, which depended on the policy of the manager and oversmen who, for example, could refuse to allow miners down in the cage into the pit after a certain time in the morning. This was company policy of the Bairds of Gartsherrie and in one occasion the general manager, J. Alexander sent a testy reminder to W.C. Mitchell, the contractor at No. 1 Pit.

> 'We beg to remind you of the requisition in our letter of the 4 inst. as to your not allowing the men to descend to their work in your pit after 6 a.m. You will please see that the rule be rigidly enforced after Monday.'[42]

Similarly the manager and oversmen had control over the time when miners were to be allowed up from the pit. For this reason their 'underground hours' tended to be long throughout most of this period. During the eighteen forties, fifties and sixties there are reports of miners being underground about twelve hours per day, sometimes as few as ten and sometimes as many as fourteen.[43] A working day of nineteen hours was reported in 1861 at Cleland near Wishaw but this must be regarded as exceptionally high.[44] Not all 'underground hours' were working hours as a great deal of time was spent walking or crawling from the pit bottom to the coal face, a journey often of up to a mile, and back again at the end of the day. In a large mine however, the time

spent lowering and raising the entire work force in the shaft, the winding time, was a considerable part of the day. Above all the miners' policy of restricted 'darg' also, meant that not even all the time at the coal face was spent working.

William Cloughan, leader of the Holytown miners in the eighteen forties argued that because of the working conditions it was physically impossible to do much more than eight hours work per day in a mine. He claimed that one simply had to visit colliers' homes and see them sleeping to see how exhausted they were. They could be seen to be frequently 'starting' or 'jumping' in their sleep because ' from the fatigue of the body the mind is not at rest'.[45]

Men who went down the pit some time before six o'clock in the morning came up usually at between four and six o'clock in the afternoon. During the eighteen sixties there was growing pressure by miners throughout Britain to have these hours reduced,[46] not just as part of their policy of restricting output but also out of a desire for more leisure time. The campaign was strongly supported by Clyde Valley miners and from 1851 onwards resolutions were regularly passed demanding shorter hours or more specifically, an eight hour day.[47] Although the Fife miners had some success the underground hours in the West of Scotland remained virtually unaltered during this period in spite of pressure from the men.

The effects of these policies of regular 'holidays' and restricted darg on productivity were considerable. Table 8 showed the rise in production in the whole region from 1856 to 1874 with particularly spectacular growth in East Lanarkshire and more fitful growth in the remainder of the West of Scotland. It is however difficult to make comparison between these trends and those of productivity per miner. To measure productivity information is required about numbers of coal-face workers and of oncost workers and also about numbers of shifts

worked per week or per year. One of the few collieries for which such detailed information is available is Govan which belonged to William Dixon and Co. The scholarly and illuminating work which has been written about Govan shows that in a six-day working week (exceptionally high for West of Scotland) the average output per man per week at the coal-face between 1856 and 1874 was usually about twelve or thirteen tons. While that average fluctuated it did not show any significant trend upwards or downwards during the period.[48]

From the vague and general information available for the whole Clyde Valley region the only useful measure of productivity possible is in output per man per year, making no distinction between coal face and oncost workers. For the West of Scotland (excluding East Lanarkshire) the necessary information is available from 1861 onwards by dividing the number of tons of coal produced by the number of colliers employed which was estimated each year by the Mines Inspector. Because there are two sets of output figures for the region down to 1866 (as Table 8 shows) there are two possible estimates of output per man/year. Using the same information for East Lanarkshire for such years as it is available the same productivity measurement can be made for that part of the region. The results are given along with comparative figures for the whole of Scotland in Table 11. The two most striking points emerging from these statistics are first the sharp fluctuations in productivity from year to year and second the fact that there is no general trend towards higher productivity. Only in East Lanarkshire with its new more productive mines can a significant increase be seen, although even there there were fluctuations.

The graph Figure 4 illustrates the fluctuations in output per man year. It shows a peak or 'plateau' from 1861 to 1864 dropping to a trough in 1865, 1866 and 1867 climbing to a peak in 1871 and dropping to a trough in 1874. Virtually the same fluctuations have been found in the productivity of coal face workers at Govan colliery.[49]

The most significant fact which can explain these peaks and troughs is that they are the very opposite of those of the general state of the coal trade in Scotland mentioned in Chapter One.[50] They are also the opposite of the peaks and troughs in miners' wages in the Clyde Valley shown in Figure 5. Thus when trade was brisk, demand high and wages high the miners restricted their output and productivity was low. In this they conformed to what has been found to be a general pattern among British miners between 1850 and 1914. A study of productivity in the British coal industry from 1850 to 1914 found that 'one general trend is indisputably evident - the tendency of prices and in their train wages to move in the opposite direction to productivity'.[51] Sometimes productivity was limited by the miners' restricted darg and sometimes by extensive strike action as was probably the case in 1866 for example.[52] It will be shown in Chapter Eight that large scale strikes often took place when periods of high wages were coming to an end and there were threats of reductions.[53]

It is regrettable that the kind of figures in Table 11 are not available for the period from 1842 until 1861. It is probably reasonable to surmise, however, that since miners' policies of restriction were as prevalent then as in the period 1861-74 their productivity probably fluctuated in a similar pattern. That pattern was that the miners, paid by piece work as they were, worked hard when pay rates were low to keep their wages at a certain level and eased off when pay was high. It has already been seen that, if Thomas Stewart and David Wingate were representative, many miners disliked their work intensely and wanted more leisure. It has also been seen that union leaders like William Cloughan in the eighteen forties wanted them to restrict output as part of their struggle with employers. Hence the lower productivity at times of high wages.

Conclusion

Scottish miners who thought of themselves in the mid nineteenth

century as independent artisans were gradually being proved wrong in the Clyde Valley during this period. The traditional stoop-and-room method of working was gradually, by the eighteen seventies being replaced by longwall working. During the same period the mining labour force was expanding so rapidly that a controlled craft style method of training was impossible. The work of the miner however, remained as primitive and difficult as ever, but a little less dangerous as the accident rate dropped noticeably. Their dislike of their work and residual feelings of independence caused miners to restrict their working hours and their output whenever possible especially when wage rates were high. At that time there was a collective restraint in production which testified to the strong collective feelings among Clyde Valley colliers in spite of their declining 'independence'. This collectivism was to be an important basis for the attempts at trade unionism which were made between 1842 and 1874.

Chapter Two - Notes

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Chapter Three

The Miners' Wages

The miners' attitudes to their employers were influenced more by their wages than by any other aspect of their work. The fluctuation in these wages, employers' deductions and other constraints such as weighing of output, periods between payments and the operation of truck stores were the most vital issues affecting trade unionism among miners and industrial action such as strikes. In this chapter the problems of estimating miners' wages will first be considered such as the differences in piece rate payments and in output. Deductions by employers varied in number and in rate leading to further differences in wages. In spite of these difficulties contemporary estimates were made of miners' average daily wages and several of these estimates are brought together and compared in this chapter. They are in general agreement about the frequent and sharp fluctuations in wages which constituted the miners' principal grievance during this period.

Two other bitter grievances affecting wages are also considered here, the methods of weighing miners' output and the truck system. It will be argued that truck survived longer and on a larger scale in West of Scotland mines than elsewhere because it was the policy principally of several powerful ironmasters, because local magistrates chose not to enforce anti-truck legislation and finally because of the failure of miners' resistance to this system.

Deductions from Wages

Any general estimate of miners' wages in the Clyde Valley in any year during this period is bound to be open to question and qualification because there were so many differences in the rates of pay between different classes of miners and between different districts. Coal miners for example were often paid more than ironstone miners. Those employed by coal masters were sometimes paid more than those employed by

ironmasters. Hewers were paid more and at a different rate from oncost workers, the former by piece rate and the latter at a certain rate per shift worked, irrespective of output. This was the case for example at Dixon's Govan Colliery.[1] Calculation of wages is further complicated by the deductions or 'offtakes' which most employers took from miners' pay. The main charge levied by the Duke of Hamilton, for example, was for house rents at his Avonbanks, Quarter, Auchenheath and Cambuslang collieries. His miners had to provide their own tools or 'graith' and the Duke's managers sometimes sold them items like riddles.[2]

These were relatively few offtakes compared to those deducted at Govan colliery belonging to William Dixon & Co. There the pay book had seven columns for offtakes namely for house rents, fire coal, pick sharpening, school, friendly society, funeral and surgeon.[3] Deductions for a friendly society and funeral fund were rather exceptional and were peculiar to Govan where a so-called 'Friendly and Free Labour Society' had been set up by the employers in an attempt, partly, to prevent trade unionism from spreading among the miners.[4]

The other Govan offtakes seem to have been quite typical of those deducted by other employers in the Clyde Valley. At Auchenheath and Craignethan Collieries near Lesmahagow belonging to James Ferguson, there were deductions for fire coal, house rents, smith work (pick sharpening) medical attendance and the school.[5] Several employers made additional charges for lamp-wicks and for blasting powder.[6] Only the bigger mine-owners provided schools for their workers' children, which gave them the right to deduct money for the teachers' salaries. In most cases deductions for a doctor or surgeon came into operation only after the Mines Act of 1860.

Certain offtakes, then, were quite generally deducted throughout the region at this time but the amounts deducted varied from mine to mine. Pick sharpening for example cost miners three pence per week at Dundyvan

Coatbridge in 1843,[7] nine pence per fortnight at Govan in 1859,[8] eight pence per day at Wishaw in 1862 (with powder and oil included)[9] and six pence or 1s 6d per fortnight at Auchenheath in 1872.[10] House rent at Dundyvan in 1843 was one shilling per week, at Govan in 1859 two, three or four shillings a fortnight and at Auchenheath in 1872 it was two or three shillings per fortnight.[11] The school contributions at Govan were sixpence or ninepence per fortnight.[12] At Bairds' Gartsherrie Colliery in 1870 they were five pence per week plus seven pence for one child at school, one shilling for two children and one shilling and three pence for three or more children.[13] At Auchenheath this deduction also seemed to depend upon how many children a miner had at school. One miner for example in 1872 was being charged one shilling and tenpence per fortnight while others had nothing deducted.[14] For the services of a doctor at Govan, Dixon deducted sixpence, one shilling or one shilling and sixpence per man per fortnight.[15] Bairds on the other hand from 1856 until the end of our period charged only 1½d or two pence per week.[16]

These selected examples of offtakes show how difficult it is to generalise about the amounts which miners lost from their wages in this way. At Govan it was estimated as at least a twenty per cent deduction[17] and in 1862 Alexander McDonald estimated them to be a similar percentage of wages in the Wishaw district.[18] But this could vary substantially from miner to miner. The harder a man worked, for example, the more pick sharpening, oil and powder he would need. The bigger a man's family the more school fees he would have to pay. The bigger his house the higher his rent, if it was a company owned house.

At certain times during this period the Clyde Valley miners' leaders spoke out against offtakes. In the eighteen forties William Cloughan claimed that the system contributed to the impoverishment of miners,[19] Alexander McDonald argued in the sixties that offtakes constituted a cut in Scottish miners' wages which did not affect English miners.[20] He

also pointed to the special grievance of Irish Catholic immigrant miners who were compelled to pay for teachers and doctors who were not of their persuasion nor of their choice.[21] At Gartsherrie, however, Messrs. Baird who were not known for their responsiveness to workers' requests were forced in 1850 to replace their doctor with a new one. The general manager wrote to Dr. Tennant the holder of the job,

'I have finally been forced to accept the demands of the men for a new doctor so kindly call to arrange a retiring allowance.'[22]

Even in Bairds grievances on this matter were capable of redress if pressure from the miners was strong enough.

Wage Rates and Fluctuations

In spite of the variations in offtakes general estimates of miners' wages for the Clyde Valley were made quite regularly in the mid-nineteenth century. The most frequent measurement was the average daily wage rate of coal hewers. Because of the fact that they were paid by piece rate, the validity of an average daily wage for miners presupposed the existence of two separate norms, one a daily output norm among coal-face workers, the other a wage-rate norm among employers. It has already been seen that working hours and conditions varied from mine to mine. It has also been seen that Clyde Valley miners often restricted their output for various reasons. But this policy was never implemented universally throughout the whole region. For these reasons it is unlikely that there was ever a time during this period when all miners had the same daily output.

There was probably more validity in the idea of a pay rate norm paid by employers in a district or throughout the region. While there were some occasions when, for example, Lanarkshire miners were being paid more than in Ayrshire or when some employers paid at a higher or lower rate than others, nevertheless there were generally similar rates throughout the region because most mineowners were subject to the same market forces

and the same price fluctuations. It has been seen in Chapter One that this convergence within a competitive situation had many important implications for miners' pay rates and therefore for industrial relations leading to strikes when ironmasters paid less than coalmasters when iron prices fell or when the miners tried forcing one mineowner by strike action to give a pay rise thus leading the way for other owners to give the same rise.[23] Strikes like these confirmed the assumption of a common rate of pay among miners.

Despite this coformity of mineowners in their rates of pay the use of a notional average daily wage for miners is open to many questions and qualifications because of the differences in offtakes and in output among miners. Yet although the average daily wage figure cannot be regarded as giving a precise or detailed picture of miners' pay it can be used as a rough guide for measuring fluctuations in their pay. The graph in Figure 5 brings together several contemporary estimates of miners daily wage rates and their fluctuations from 1850-74. The annual averages produced in Pomphrey's Directory of Wishaw and by Richard Meade show complete agreement from 1855 until 1871. Thereafter although their figures are different the trends are similar. The newspaper figures which were collected from six different local journals show that in addition to fluctuations in annual average wages there were more frequent changes, usually several times each year from 1855 onwards.

Figure 5 shows general agreement among all the sources about major fluctuations in miners' wages. These were very similar to fluctuations in pig iron prices with peak years in 1854, 1866 and 1873 and trough years in 1858-9, 1861, 1868 and 1874. Various studies have shown the correlation between fluctuations in miners' wages and in pig iron prices and between both of these and the cycles of the British economy.[24] Professor Campbell has also shown that fluctuations in pig iron prices were particularly frequent being intensified probably by

speculation in the Glasgow Pig Iron Market.[25] This in turn had its effect on miners' wages. The fluctuations in their wages from month to month and from year to year had a profound and unsettling effect on a miner's family economy. There can have been little sense of economic stability or security for men whose pay fluctuated as much and as often as Figure 5 shows. These fluctuations were such as to produce the most frequent and most bitter disputes between miners and their employers in the West of Scotland during the period 1842-74.

But the wages of an individual miner and hence his relations with his employer were also affected by the employers' system of weighing miners' output, the interest on advance payments, truck shops and the contract between master and employee, all inter-related issues.

Weighing of Output

Since miners were paid according to the weight of coal and ironstone they produced the weighing methods of employers were bound to be of vital importance, not least in industrial relations. During the eighteen forties and fifties the weighing methods of many employers produced constant discontent among miners in the West of Scotland. Each miner's produce was taken in 'hutches' or carts to the pit bottom and raised to the pithead for weighing. A hutch had to hold a standard weight of coal (or ironstone) which varied between collieries and changed during the period. In the eighteen fifties a standard weight was 486 lbs, that is 4 cwt. 38 lbs.[26] In subsequent years as winding gear improved bigger hutches or carts were used to hold 12 cwt or more.[27] With each hutch the miner sent up a pin or a tally, often home-made, with a distinguishing device or initial on it so that the coal or ironstone could be identified as that miner's output.

Thereafter, according to William Cloughan in 1845 in Lanarkshire any one of four different weighing methods might be used. By one method if a miner sent up six hutches in one day he was only paid according to

the weight of the lightest one - multiplied six times. In other mines if a miner sent up a hutch which was eleven pounds lighter than the standard weight he forfeited payment for the whole hutch. If it was 22 pounds lighter then he lost payment for two hutches. No extra payment was given for hutches which were over the standard weight. A third method used in other Lanarkshire mines involved an arbitrary judgement being made by a pitheadman as to whether or not hutches were up to weight. Cloughan claimed that pitheadmen were simply puppets of the employers and that they gained thousands of pounds (sterling) for their masters by condemning hutches they thought were not up to weight, no payment being given to the miners for those condemned hutches. A fourth system and the only just one according to Cloughan used in only a few mines, involved the careful weighing of each hutch and the payment of miners according to the weight they produced.[28] Miners of the region also complained of some of their output being condemned and not paid for because it contained 'foul coals or stones or blaes attached to stones'.[29]

The mineral accounts of the Duke of Hamilton's Lanarkshire estates show how the Duke gained as a result of one of these weight systems. The totals for each year of the eighteen forties and fifties show that more coal was sold than the miners had been paid for producing, making allowance for the additional stock on hand at the beginning and end of the year. This extra amount which was sold but for which the miners were not paid was entered in each year's abstract as 'Increase on Output' and was the result of a weighing system whereby the miners produced more coal than they were paid for. Table 12 shows how much coal the miners were paid for and how much unpaid 'increase' they produced in each of the Duke of Hamilton's collieries in 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844 and 1849-50. The column of totals shows that all the Duke's colliers in

1841 were paid for 63,739 tons and produced 2,897 tons unpaid
1842 " " " 48,944 " " " 3,955 " "

1843 were paid for 53,205 tons and produced 2,369 tons unpaid

1844 " " " 54,092 " " " 3,748 " "

For these years 219,980 tons was their total output plus 12,969 tons of unpaid 'increase'. This meant that for every eighteen tons which the miners produced they were only being paid for seventeen. The price at which the Duke's coal was sold varied between four shillings and eight shillings per ton which meant that with an average selling price of six shillings per ton then 12,969 tons of 'free' coal which the miners produced between 1841 and 1844 should yield for the Duke a sum of about £3,980, almost £1,000 per annum.

It is hardly surprising that situations such as this angered miners throughout the West of Scotland. A Scottish Miners' Congress in 1844 described the weighing of outputs as a 'system of robbing . . . practised by the employers'.[30] At a meeting of Lanarkshire miners in 1852 a complaint was made that the system was producing too much inequality of output since some employers it was said were getting as much as 20 cwt per cart others only 14 cwt.[31] In 1852 Joseph Scobbie a miner at Bartonshill Colliery, Baillieston took his employers, the Bartonshill Coal Company to court, claiming they had denied him payment for certain coal without weighing it. The pitheadman claimed that the hutch was of inadequate weight but admitted that he had not weighed it. The sheriff in Airdrie Sheriff Court found in favour of Scobbie.[32] This was probably the origin of the term 'scobbed' as defined some years later by James Barrowman.

> 'A hutch of mineral is "scobbed" when large piles are laid over the corners to give the appearance of the hutch being full, where there is in reality little material in it'.[33]

It is not known if Scobbie used this trick in 1852 but his victory over his employer and the use of tricks like this by miners in numerous pits may go part of the way to explaining why employers found it necessary

to use stringent and apparently unjust systems of weighing.

At meeting after meeting of miners the injustices of weighing were condemned. A Scottish Miners' Conference in 1853 described it for example as 'the greatest injustice'.[34] In 1854 Cloughan had suggested that the miners should be given the right to appoint their own check-weighmen to supervise and ensure fair weighing at the pithead [35] and this idea remained one of the claims of miners' leaders until it was finally granted by Parliament in the 1860 Mines Act.[36]

But the appointment of justicemen did not allay the grievances of all miners about weighing. At Greenfield Colliery near Shettleston, for example, the owners insisted on maintaining a weighing system whereby a miner would be paid the full amount for a hutch weighing 4 cwt 37 lbs. But if it were one pound less than that only two hundredweight would be paid for and if it weighed less than four hundredweight nothing would be paid. If on the other hand it weighed more than 4 cwt 37 lbs no extra would be paid.[37] The few attempts which were made by individual miners to take their employers to court claiming debt for unpaid coal met with some success.[38] As more and more justicemen were appointed, however, the old complaints about non-payment for under weight gradually disappeared during the eighteen sixties. But there were some new complaints usually about weighing machines which were thought to be faulty. A deputation of miners in 1861 to Sir Archibald Alison, Sheriff of Lanarkshire requested that inspectors of weights and measures should make regular inspections of these machines.[39] Alexander McDonald made the same point to the Select Committee on Mines in 1866 adding that this matter was still a cause of bitterness among the miners.[40] According to Lord Elcho, the Tory MP, in a letter to McDonald the mineowners were opposed to the imposition of a uniform accurate weighing system because of the expense of the machines and the weighers' wages.[41] Weighing therefore remained a sensitive issue in industrial relations in mining in the West of

Scotland for thirty years after 1842 in spite of the improvements which legislation brought about.

Truck

But perhaps the most sensitive issue between Clyde Valley miners and their employers, affecting the wages of many miners throughout this whole period,was the truck system. By compelling the miners and their families to trade only in company-owned (or truck) stores many mineowners established a very powerful control over them. McDonald complained regularly about truck testifying before the Select Committee on Master and Servant in 1866, the Select Committee on Mines in 1866, the Royal Commission on Trade Unions in 1868 and the Truck Commission in 1871. In so doing he gave a great deal of information about how in his opinion the system worked in the West of Scotland then and in his youth in the eighteen thirties and forties. Several of the leading 'offenders' among mineowners also gave their opinions to the Truck Commission in 1871.

The power of the masters to enforce trading at the company store originated with the long periods between pays sometimes one, two or three months according to McDonald.[42] This had been made easier by the long contracts by which their men were committed to work at a particular mine. The Truck Act of 1831 made one year contracts illegal and thereafter there was a change in the West of Scotland to fortnightly contracts which were widely used during the eighteen forties and which required fourteen days notice being given before leaving work or before a dismissal. In the fifties many employers gradually abandoned the contract system altogether so that by 1866 McDonald could testify that 'throughout a great portion of Scotland the system of service by contract does not exist and that persons employed in the mines are employed in what has been called the system of minute contracts.'[43]

The word truck meant literally 'payment in kind' and in the earlier years of this period masters had enforced trading at their truck stores

by paying men in special coinage or tokens or even lines for trading at the company store.[44] This practice was contrary to the Truck Act of 1831 and was again prohibited by the Mines Act of 1860 which stipulated that wages were to be paid in coin of the realm. McDonald testified however that as late as 1868 there were still cases of failure to pay in cash.[45]

By 1868 three Acts of Parliament had included measures for the suppression of truck in 1831, 1842 and 1860[46] but it continued to be widely operated in the West of Scotland, partly because many employers still paid their miners only once a month. Many of the men's families could not make their money last as long as that and so advance payments were given at a rate of interest usually one shilling in the pound and known as 'poundage'.[47] According to McDonald 'poundage' gave employers further power over the miners, forcing them to spend the money in their stores because although 'they are paid in the terms of the statute in the coin of the realm if they carry the coin elsewhere they get no more (i.e. cash advances).All that they get out of theoffice or at least the larger proportion of it they must spend at the stores'.[48] Even in mines where the men were paid fortnightly many of them needed advance payments and the pay books of Govan Colliery and of Auchenheath and Craignethan Collieries show that substantial sums were deducted each pay day from the wages of numerous miners because advances had been given.[49] While neither of these collieries used advance payments as part of a truck system, they increased the employers' power over the miners and showed that it was possible to operate a truck store through miners' indebtedness even on fortnightly pays.

In some cases miners were compelled to use the company store by the mine officials. McDonald described how this worked in 1871.

'If a man was not at the store regularly the oversman called upon him and told him it was expected that he would deal with the

> store . . . After that hint was given, if the man did not go to the store the hint was repeated and then if he still persisted in taking away the money, he found that some quarrel or another was mysteriously got up and he was dismissed'.[50]

One of the mineowning companies of which McDonald was most critical with reference to truck was Messrs. Merry and Cunninghame. One of the partners, John Cunninghame, admitting in 1871 that his company did operate many truck stores and levied poundage on wage advances also agreed that compulsion was used at some of these stores to force men to trade there adding however that he opposed this and had ordered it to be stopped. The storekeepers were employed by the company's several managers but were given a great deal of independence. As long as they produced a steady profit of eight or nine per cent and as long as there were no major complaints expressed against them they were not subject to any supervision in their running of stores.[51]

During the eighteen thirties it had been the practice of numerous employers to pay their men in a public house, usually owned by the company and adjacent to the store. By 1866 although the Acts of 1842 and 1860 had prohibited this McDonald pointed out that some big employers paid their men in pay offices which were next door to company public-houses and stores[52] so that the obvious combination of temptation and compulsion led the men to spend a great deal of their pay on drink. The photograph, Figure 6, shows the store at Quarter near Hamilton which several inhabitants including ex-miners believe was a truck store.[53] The house behind the store was the store keeper's and behind that is the public house. There are connecting doors between all three and several ex-miners in conversation say that they remember hearing how at one time, long before their lifetimes, the miners were paid in the public house, some say in tokens which could only be used there or the store. Their tales are not necessarily reliable with reference to Quarter, being part

rather of the folk lore of all West of Scotland miners. Nevertheless the layout of store - storekeeper's house - public house with connecting doors shows how the system might have worked.

Another of the miners' frequent complaints about truck stores was that they overcharged. A Coatbridge provision merchant Andrew Steel made this claim in a letter to the Northern Star in October 1843.[54]

'the public of Coatbridge and neighbourhood will do well to stop and read Steel's comparisons of prices of provisions.

	Prices generally charged by the stores belonging to Iron & Coal Masters	Prices generally charged by Steel's Provision Stores
Oatmeal per peck	9d	8d
Potatoes " "	9½d	9d
Barley " "	12d	8-10d
Flour " "	12d	8-10d
Butter per lb	11d	6-9d
Cheese " "	7-8d	4½-5½d
Bacon/Ham per lb	8d	4-4½d
Beef " "	8d	4-7d
Tea per oz.	5d	3½d
Tobacco per oz.	3½d	3d
Salt Herring per lb	2d	1d
Brown Soap	6½d	5-5½d
Whiskey per gill	4d	3d
Flour (1b) fine loaf	7d	5½d

This evidence is open to two obvious criticisms. First that Steel might simply have been advertising his own goods and trying to undercut the mineowners' stores and second that there would be extra transport costs for goods being taken out to stores adjacent to mines which would explain the difference in prices. But many others were also of the opinion that

truck shops were overcharging. William Cloughan and the committee of Holytown miners in 1844 addressed their fellow miners about 'the 25 per cent you are charged more for your good in the store than in the regular shops'.[55] The totals of prices quoted by Steel came to

Truck Stores - 8s 9½d

Steel's Store - 6s ½d - 7s ½d

This roughly confirms Cloughan's claim and suggest overcharging by anything from twenty to thirty per cent. These were both rather prejudiced witnesses. In 1870 the Mines Inspectors for East and West Scotland testified that prices in company stores were reasonable - often good value. 'But it would be difficult', added the Truck Commissioners, 'to resist the strong evidence in Scotland as to the habitually high prices and occasionally inferior quality of store goods'.[56] They cited examples and their comment is probably the most conclusive evidence of the overcharging which persisted in numerous truck shops throughout this period.

Commenting on the general effects of truck stores in 1844 the Commissioner for the Mining Districts argued that they had a beneficial effect in one respect 'in abridging the duration of strikes which are often occurring and which are so injurous to the interests of the men as well as the masters'.[57] It was his opinion, however, that in general the existence of truck stores was harmful to the miners and he expressed this opinion quite consistently throughout his term of office as Commissioner until 1859.[58] By 1871 the system as it operated in the West of Scotland was being criticised by other government commissioners, the Truck Commissioners, who after taking extensive evidence at Hamilton and Glasgow between the 29th August and the 12th of September 1870, wrote about the 'evils of truck' in the region and expressed particular concern about its moral effects on the mining population.[59]

The miners' opposition to truck was constant throughout the period. During an extensive strike in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire in 1842 truck was frequently cited as a cause of the dispute.[60] In 1844 William Cloughan described truck as 'our bitter nay, our greatest enemy' and blamed truck shops for impoverishment of miners and their indebtedness which led in turn to overwork and extra exposure to dangers.[61] The miners produced numerous petitions listing their grievances in which truck always had a prominent position. Such a petition was sent by Lanarkshire miners to the Lord Lieutenant, Sheriff and magistrates of the courts in 1843 and said,

> 'We consider that no employer has a right to supply his workmen with provisions as it has a tendency to compel the workmen to comply with whatever measures the caprice or interest of the employer may dictate either in the reducing of wages or the taking away of workmen's rights'.[62]

The Scottish miners' conference organised in 1852 by the Holytown miners had a statement of objects beginning - 'the objects of the congress are first, the truck shops - its baneful effects.'[63] The Holytown miners again in 1856 had their list of grievances read to the Select Committee on Masters and Operatives which included a reference to truck.

> 'The truck system is another grievance loudly complained of; in spite of all laws passed to the contrary, the employers manage to conduct a system almost as purely truck as language can express it'.[64]

Even after the reforms brought in by the 1860 Mines Act miners still complained about the persistence of truck. This contributed to several strikes of which one of the longest was at Annbank Colliery near Ayr in 1863. The owner John Gordon compelled miners to trade at his store

and paid them at monthly intervals, sometimes it was alleged at intervals of six weeks.[65] During their strike the men had the support of local people including Lieutenant Colonel Shaw who had served in the army in India. In his opinion the miners' conditions at Annbank were worse than anything he had seen in India.[66] The strike ended after eight weeks when Gordon agreed among other things to end compulsion to trade in his store.[67]

All this opposition to truck from government commissioners as well as from the miners themselves gives rise to two questions. How extensive was the system? and how and why did it survive so long? The earliest figures available to answer the first question were submitted by Alexander McDonald to the Select Committee on Mines.[68] These figures were not the results of any official survey but rather of McDonald's diligence and his very extensive knowledge of mines in the West of Scotland. Nobody on the Select Committee seemed to question his figures nor among interested parties when the Report was published, so they must be presumed to be fairly accurate. Table 13 gives a summary comparing numbers of truck stores in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire. McDonald quotes no cases of such stores in West Stirlingshire and only one in Dunbartonshire, at Knightswood which has been subsumed within the Glasgow figures.

The table shows how much more widely truck was used in Lanarkshire than in the rest of the Clyde Valley, there being fifty stores in Lanarkshire compared to eleven in Ayrshire and three in Renfrewshire. This was not just in proportion to the greater number of mines in Lanarkshire than elsewhere. Table 1 shows that in 1865 there were twice as many coal mines in Lanarkshire as in Ayrshire while both counties probably had similar numbers of ironstone mines. But McDonald's figures show that there were nearly five times as many truck stores in Lanarkshire as in Ayrshire. Within Lanarkshire Table 13 shows that

truck was most prevalent in the districts of Glasgow - Maryhill, Coatbridge, Holytown and Wishaw. The Lesmahagow-Larkhall category shown also includes Shotts and is too widespread to be considered a district. Its prevalence around Holytown dated back many years, remembering Cloughan's pronouncements in the eighteen forties and the Holytown petitions of the fifties. The district where the largest number of miners was affected was Coatbridge. Although only six mines had stores in that district five of these six were in big mines owned by ironmasters.

The comparison between numbers of truck stores owned by ironmasters and those owned by coalmasters shows that in the West of Scotland thirty six stores were owned by ironmasters compared to twenty eight owned by coalmasters. More significantly, the ironmasters' stores were attached to bigger mines affecting more miners. Over thirteen thousand miners employed by ironmasters were subjected to the truck system compared to only 3,280 employed by coalmasters. The total number of miners involved was therefore about 16,310 according to McDonald's figures. Using census figures of miners in the West of Scotland for 1861 and 1871 and assuming a constant rate of increase the total number of miners in the region may have been about 31,000, so that almost half of these men were subject to truck at the time of McDonald's figures in 1866.

His figures also show how many stores each ironmaster owned as follows.

<u>Truck Stores Owned by Ironmasters</u>

Merry and Cunninghame	-	12
Summerlee Iron Co.	-	9
Monkland Iron & Steel Co.	-	4
Wm. Dixon	-	3
Shotts Iron Co.	-	2
Coltness Iron Co.	-	2
Wishaw Iron Co.	-	1

Mossend Iron Co.	-	1
Dalmellington Iron Co.	-	1
R. Addie & Co.	-	1

None of the coalmasters on the other hand had more than two truck stores.

On the list above an iron company noticeable by its absence was Bairds of Gartsherrie with its Ayrshire Branch, Eglinton Iron Co. In earlier years Bairds had had truck stores but had abandoned the system by the eighteen sixties, a change which McDonald attributed to 'the enlightenment of the age, the strong expression of public opinion and the bringing of their name frequently before the House of Commons in connection with that system'.[69] In place of truck stores Bairds assisted the establishment of co-operative stores at most of their mines. At Gartsherrie for example the store was managed by a committee of fifteen men, three appointed by the company and twelve by the men.[70]

Fortnightly payments according to Table 13 were more common than monthly but here again the ironmasters were greater 'offenders' than coalmasters since of the twenty three cases of monthly pays in the West of Scotland, twenty one were at mines owned by ironmasters.[71]

Ironmasters in West of Scotland giving Monthly Pays - 1866

Merry and Cunninghame	-	9 mines
Monkland Iron and Steel	-	4 "
Summerlee Iron Co.	-	4 "
Shotts Iron and Steel	-	2 "
Coltness Iron Co.	-	2 "

The whole system of truck (and with itmonthly payments) in Clyde Valley mines was based very largely, then, on ironmasters. Over eighty per cent of 'trucked' miners in the region were employed by ironmasters and they also owned over ninety per cent of the mines wheremonthly pays

were given. At the top of the list of these ironmasters were Merry and Cunninghame with twelve truck stores and nine mines giving monthly pay. But when John Cunninghame was questioned by the Truck Commissioners he did not offer a very spirited defence. It was his opinion that a well run store without any compulsion on the men to use it was a benefit to a mine and the miners.[72] But he admitted that compulsion was used in several of his stores, that these stores caused dissatisfaction or distress among his employees and even that they had an adverse effect in some cases on the efficiency of the mine since good miners would not want to work where there were such stores and also because the grievances could contribute to strikes.[73]

In the light of comments like these it is even more surprising that truck persisted so long in the region. Looking at the incidence of the system over the whole of Scotland, however, it is clear that it was carried on mainly in the West. Table 13 shows that there were almost six times as many stores in the Clyde Valley as in the remainder of Scotland a finding which was confirmed by the Truck Commission.[74] What was it about the mining industry of the West of Scotland which allowed truck to survive to such an extent? There were three reasons for its survival: the unique strength of West of Scotland ironmasters on whom the system was based, the failure of law officers to enforce anti-truck legislation and the weakness of resistance by the mining population.

The power of the ironmasters has already been discussed in Chapter One and Tables 3 and 4 show their predominance in parts of Ayrshire, especially Dalry and Cummnock and in the Glasgow, Coatbridge and Holytown districts of Lanarkshire. Their pits were often large, employing big numbers and dominating whole communities so as to control work prospects for most miners there as for example did Merry and Cunninghame in Dalry and Johnstone and the Monkland Iron and Steel Company at Holytown and Chapelhall. The fact that they owned several mines gave them the

additional advantage that they were not completely dependent on any single one of them, so that a strike in one mine would be unlikely to bring an iron company to a halt or to hold it to ransom. Advantages like these enabled the Clyde Valley ironmasters to continue with truck and associated policies relatively untroubled.

The officers of the law in the region moreover did not see it as their duty to enforce the laws referring to truck. The sheriff of Renfrewshire for example said,

> 'The Truck Act is in abeyance altogether simply from the fact that it is nobody's business to challenge the violation of it.'[75]

The Procurator Fiscal of Hamilton district said that it was not his responsibility to find infringements of the Truck Act.

> 'Can you inform us whose duty it is?'
>
> 'It is the duty of every man who finds himself aggrieved.'
>
> 'Suppose a miner were aggrieved, would the information be given to you or to the police?'
>
> 'To either but I never had any information of the kind . . . He would require to employ an agent to conduct his case for him and proceed in his own name.'[76]

The onus was therefore on the miners to oppose truck in the courts. They had to have the courage, the money, the legal advice and knowledge to take on their employers in a struggle where they could end up by being defeated, or dismissed from their jobs. Understandably very few miners made the attempt. One of the few to do so was called McInnes who challenged the Shotts Iron Company in a case which dragged on from 1854 until 1859 and ended with his defeat.[77] His experience probably discouraged any other from bringing civil or criminal charges against their employers.

In 1844 Cloughan and the Holytown miners realising how ineffective the anti-truck legislation was said,

> 'Government has tried its strength against "Truck" but in vain. Its power when tabled against the coal and iron masters has been found too light and when weighed in the balance has been found wanting . . . This being the case then, Brethren, yourselves alone must put down the truck system.'[78]

One method which Cloughan suggested of putting down truck stores was to boycott them using a fund which would be raised by the Holytown Committee to give support to those who had previously depended on the stores. Nothing seems to have come of the scheme, probably because the Committee were unable to raise enough money to provide the large amount of credit which would be necessary. A boycott would be difficult to carry out also because of the employers' methods of compulsion and because of the distance from other shops. For miners' families in Chapelhall or Cambroe for example there was a walk of several miles to shops at Coatbridge or Airdrie.

Even for those who were able to trade with other shops it was all too easy to be sucked into the same quagmire of credit and debt. In Scotland the Law of Arrestment of Wages, whereby a shopkeeper could have a debtor's wages stopped by law to repay the debt caused frequent hardship and impoverishment among miners,[79] in spite of a reformed law of 1837 which said 'that wages of labourers . . . shall so far as necessary for their subsistence be deemed alimentary . . . not liable to arrestment.'[80] The phrase 'so far as necessary for their subsistence' was often interpreted very severely and the law continued to cause hardship throughout most of this period as McDonald testified in 1866.[81]

The alternative to legal action, or boycotting the stores was to take industrial action. In addition to the 1842 strike in Lanarkshire and the 1863 Annbank strike both of which were partly against truck there were several other strikes in a similar category, that is including the abolition of truck and/or monthly pays among other demands. Such

strikes took place throughout Airdrie, Coatbridge and Holytown in 1844, at the Summerlee Iron Company's mines at Maryhill in 1863, and at the same company's mines at Coatbridge in 1870.[82] Apart from those in 1842 and 1844 the strikes were limited to one or two, or at the most four mines. Most were unsuccessful, partly because the abolition of truck was one among several demands in every case, so that when other demands such as wage rises were granted the strikes ended, with truck continuing.

Although there were no major strikes during the period which were directed exclusively against truck and long payments the system often embittered disputes between masters and men on other issues such as wages. McDonald was at pains to point out in 1871 that it had always been his policy to discourage strikes and to try rather to have the matter redressed by Parliament, hence the petitions and his frequent testimonies before government committees.[83] This all helped to produce legislative improvements, especially in 1860 and 1872 but further reforms proved necessary as late as 1887 and 1896 to bring truck to an end. McDonald's policy and the legislative achievements of this period created some legal obstacles to the operation of truck, and stirred up some public opinion, but as long as the ironmasters remained predominant in the Clyde Valley and the miners submissive, the system would persist in spite of legal obstacles or public opinion.

Why were the miners submissive? A policy of legal action against employers seemed too difficult and dangerous, boycotting stores was impractical and legislative reform inadequate (at that period). Why, then, was there so little industrial action in the form of strikes against truck at a period when there were hundreds of strikes by miners of the region on other issues? To be successful a strike against truck would need to be widespread to immobilise entire iron companies, with financial support for the strikers and a clear and single objective from which the men would not be shifted. Chapter Eight which deals with the miners'

use of strikes in the Clyde Valley will discuss in full the problems of organising such a large and tightly disciplined strike in a region and industry where cheap replacement labour was readily available and where large numbers were migratory, moving from pit to pit. The Truck Commissioners ventured the opinion that truck was less severe on the better class of men and Cunninghame confessed that mines with truck systems could not get good miners so easily.[84] So the less intelligent, less able miners were hardest hit by truck, the very miners whom it was probably most difficult to organise, mobilise and control in a large scale strike necessary to defeat truck. Hence the lack of such strikes.

Conclusion

Throughout the period from 1842 until 1874 there were nearly always grievances about the wages of miners in the West of Scotland. For some it was the number and rate of deductions for pick sharpening, schools etc., for some it was the method of weighing output for which each miner was paid for some it was the length of time between pays and for even more it was the truck system which restricted the miners' freedom in using their pay. For nearly all of these men the sharp and frequent fluctuations in wages were regular causes of hardship and complaint.

The frequency and number of their complaints, particularly about wage fluctuations produced a situation of discordant industrial relations and served more than anything to provide common causes to unite Clyde Valley miners, whether in spasmodic strike action, in policies of restricted output or in efforts to form unions. The difficulty of obtaining redress of grievances such as truck however showed up the weaknesses of the miners in their attempts at collective action throughout this period.

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12. Slaven, 'Earnings and Productivity', 225
13. Letter J. Alexander, general manager, Gartsherrie to R. Angus Logan 25 June 1870 in Gartsherrie Letter Book volume 21, 903, Coatbridge Public Library.
14. Auchenheath Colliery Pay Book 1872-4, 11 September 1872, Braidholm Pit, University of Glasgow, Department of Economic History

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Chapter Four

The Mining Population and the Miners' Way of Life

The effects of the enormous expansion of the mining population in the West of Scotland upon the miner's work, his status, his industrial bargaining power and upon his wages have all been referred to in Chapters Two and Three. This chapter deals with some social consequences of this expansion such as the nature of mining communities, the life styles and standards of some of their inhabitants and the social life of the communities. The chapter deals with them, however, only in so far as they affected trade unionism among the miners. To make a full scale sociological study of the mining communities of the region would require several separate theses and would be outwith the scope of this one.

The rate of growth as shown in Census figures for miners will be considered first with its effects on different parts of the Clyde Valley, on the structure of the mining population, the mobility of that population and the implications of all of this for the attempts at forming trade unions among the men. The different types of mining communities which appeared in the region will be described with specific examples. It will be argued that the economic and social security of a miner and his family often depended upon his relationships within the community and upon institutions of the community such as friendly societies. This had a profound effect upon the attempts to form miners' trade unions since friendly societies gave experience in organisation to several union leaders and also because economic and social security apparently had to be a principal objective of any attempted union. The standard of housing for miners, another social consequence of rapid expansion, was frequently criticised in the mid-nineteenth century and although no statistics are available numerous eye-witness descriptions from the West of Scotland give a grim picture of these houses. Examples of these will be discussed. Finally some features of the social life of mining communities will be

examined such as the availability of education, the place of religion in community life and leisure activities of miners and their families. Many of these features of social life influenced the patterns of miners' unions in the Clyde Valley as did the emergence of identifiable mining communities with distinctive life styles, culture and collective attitudes.

Growth of Mining Population

Table 14 summarises the main changes which took place in the numbers of miners of the Clyde Valley from 1841 to 1871. The total figures for the region show that 1841-50 was the decade of most rapid growth when the mining population more than doubled with an increase of almost 17,000, more than the total increase of the following two decades together. Mining towns and villages mushroomed with a consequent pressure on amenities like housing, sanitation, communication and education. Groups of people often poor and uneducated and from different cultural backgrounds were thrown together to create instant communities. The Scots colliers, a workforce which was descended largely from serf colliers of the eighteenth century were swamped by raw untrained workers whose ability to learn the job in a relatively short time eroded the status, self-esteem and industrial bargaining power of the indigenous workers. Trade unionism was therefore difficult to establish among such a new and expanding occupational group and it will be seen in Chapter Five that it was in the eighteen fifties and sixties that more lasting unions with substantial membership emerged.

Lanarkshire was the county where the industry was most extensive and the growth of its mining population is almost parallel to that of the whole region except for the decade 1851-60 when there was an increase of just over one thousand, about five per cent, compared to a twenty five per cent growth in the whole Clyde Valley. Numbers in Lanarkshire increased more rapidly again between 1861 and 1871 with the expansion

higher in the last three counties. This immigrant population provided a substantial proportion of the expanding labour force in the regions mining industry and in coal mining towns so that by 1871 the proportion of men aged twenty and over who were Irish born could vary from one in seven to as high a proportion as one in 3.4. The following four towns provide examples.[2]

Proportion of Irish-born Men Aged Twenty and Over in Four Towns 1871

Airdrie	1 man	in	3.4	was	Irish	born
Glasgow	1 "	"	4	"	"	"
Hamilton	1 "	"	6	"	"	"
Kilmarnock	1 "	"	7	"	"	"

As these figures suggest there was not an even distribution of Irish workers throughout the region nor throughout the mining industry. There were marked differences from district to district and indeed from colliery to colliery as the following comparison of three districts in 1841 shows.[3]

Proportion of Irish-born Miners in Three Districts 1841

District	Total Miners	Irish Miners
Dalry	152	14
Faskine (Old Monkland)	104	16
Summerlee (Old Monkland)	82	50

The much higher proportion in Summerlee was the result of the policy of the owners there, but in the period of expansion after 1841 the Irish immigration into all mining districts increased, again at different rates. These rates of increase between 1841 and 1871 in the Lanarkshire mining villages of Quarter and Holytown are compared in Table 16. Quarter, a small village almost two miles from Hamilton where colliers had once been part-time agricultural workers[4] began to change its character after 1854 when the landowner, the Duke of Hamilton leased the local mining rights to the ironmaster Colin Dunlop. Hence the higher proportion of Irish

miners by 1861 and 1871. Holytown by comparison was a bigger community and was the centre of a substantial mining district. Table 16 shows that it was between 1841 and 1851 that there was most rapid Irish immigration into the village. By 1861 both villages had similar proportions of Irish miners in their midst.

It is not clear what effect the Irish immigrants had upon the attempts at trade unionism among the miners. While it has already been suggested that the rapid recruitment of large numbers of new labourers would inevitably weaken the bargaining position and general status of the established workforce there remains the question of whether the Irish were particularly difficult to unionise. The historian who has written at greatest length about the Irish in Scotland argued that these miners did not play as big a part in trade unionism as did their Scottish counterparts.[5] This opinion is endorsed in a more recent study of Lanarkshire miners where it is suggested that districts such as Coatbridge with a high density of Irish population may for that reason have lacked a strong union among the miners.[6] There is however little direct evidence to support this argument; indeed Ireland produced some of the union leaders. The most outstanding of these was William Cloughan of Holytown, a miner of Irish birth[7] who was very active during the eighteen forties in organising trade unions and friendly societies.[8] Although he was an exceptional man he was not a completely isolated example of an Irish-born union leader. Thomas Hailstones who organised the Airdrie miners during the early eighteen fifties was also reported to be Irish and the leaders of the union of Hamilton miners in 1874 were Luke Gerraity and William Gallacher.[9] Furthermore the figures in Table 16 cannot be used to support the argument that Irish immigration impeded trade unionism. In Quarter strike activity increased and became fairly regular occurrence among the village miners from 1856 until 1874. Holytown was a strong centre of trade unionism and of industrial action among the miners during the forties

when Irish immigration was at its height. But by January 1863 Alexander McDonald expressed the opinion that it was the weakest mining district in the West of Scotland so far as trade unionism was concerned.[10] This was long after most Irish immigration into the area and would suggest that immigration was irrelevant to the degree of unionisation.

Furthermore there is very little evidence to suggest that Catholic - Protestant rivalry among the miners obstructed their union activity. At large union meetings the chairman was usually elected first from among those present and the newspaper reports of these meetings show that it was a not infrequent occurrence for chairmen to be elected with names like Docherty, Connelly, Caughey, Rooney or Lynch. At one of these meetings in Wishaw in May 1867 the local Catholic Band agreed to come along to provide entertainment and to raise money for one member's legal expenses.[11]

There is however a report of a strike in several mines in Airdrie in 1854 when the men lifted their graith (tools) until all the Roman Catholics should be expelled.[12] But this report is a vague one, written some fifteen years after the event and apparently unsubstantiated by other sources. There appear to be no other references to strikes caused by religious rivalry but at a miners' meeting in Wishaw in April 1867 there was an agreement that the district union should have two agents, 'one Scotchman and one Irishman . . . so that both classes may be represented in future'.[13] No action was taken on this resolution and it was an isolated episode hinting at a possible division among the miners which, however does not appear to have been a serious one at the level of trade union and other industrial activity.

Another feature of this expanding mining population which had implications for unionisation was its mobility. The continuous 'turnover' of mines shown in Table 2 meant that miners were often compelled to move around to find new jobs and many of them were migratory by nature.[14] The

result was a mobile workforce which was to prove 'a marvellously and almost ideally flexible factor of production'.[15] But this mobility was a disadvantage for union leaders because migratory workers are difficult to organise, subscriptions being difficult to collect and unity difficult to maintain. Several miners'unions in the West of Scotland included in their rules, a provision for 'clearance tickets' or 'clear lines' to be issued to members moving from one mine to another as will be explained in Chapter Seven. Article XIII of the 1855 rules of the Coal and Iron-stone Miners Association of Scotland for example laid down that a member about to move from a colliery must have a letter from his works union secretary certifying that he is a 'clear member' and not in debt to the union. In return for this the district secretary would give him a card 'to carry him to any work or district he may choose to enter . . . Any person producing a false line from any pit or work to the District Clerk shall pay a fine of one pound'.[16]

For the labour force in less secure industries than mining, mobility could be an advantage by preventing unemployment. Hence the 'clearance ticket' and the 'tramping system' were positively encouraged by some unions.[17] It could be most effectively organised, however, within a relatively small union of skilled workers, a union like the Scottish Iron Moulders Union whose rules and minutes show that the system worked for them much more thoroughly than was possible or necessary for West of Scotland miners.[18]

There are references to the clear lines system in operation in some mining districts at different times up to 1874.[19] Furthermore it was sustained in the rules of seven district unions formed between 1873 and 1875, those at Wishaw, Motherwell, Carluke, Larkhall, Hamilton, Stonehouse and Maryhill.[20] The system was clearly regarded by miners as worth maintaining but not for the purpose of positively encouraging mobility to prevent unemployment which was the policy of the Scottish Iron Moulders. Unemployment was not a problem for miners in the Clyde Valley at that

period, but the migratory nature of the mining population forced the unions to attempt to operate this more limited system in order to sustain and unite the membership. Most of the district unions were short-lived partly because of the constant turnover of membership. Direct evidence of this problem comes from a union formed after this period, the North East Lanark and Airdrie District Miners Association which was formed in 1894 and dissolved in 1895. A letter from the secretary James Anderson to the Registrar of Friendly Societies explained why the union did not last 'Owing to members shifting from place to place leaving no address and not paying arrears and having a radius of six miles and no money coming in it is impossible to have a staff of collectors to cover the ground'.[21]

The Mining Communities

It would be difficult to postulate a sociological model of a 'typical' Clyde Valley mining community of this period. Some were small and relatively isolated from other communities. Dalmellington and Cumnock in Ayrshire were in this category and so too was Shotts in Lanarkshire. Other communities were part of groups or clusters of mining towns and villages. Such a cluster was found around Airdrie, Coatbridge and Holytown incorporating smaller neighbouring villages such as Chapelhall, Calderbank, Mossend and Carnbroe. There was a smaller but comparable group of villages around Dalry which included Kilbirnie, Kilwinning and Beith. Similarly Wishaw, Motherwell, Larkhall and Hamilton grew together and were sufficiently close to each other to have a certain unity.

Finally there were mining communities which were part of bigger more diversified and longer established towns like Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock and even Hamilton. But although those mining communities were adjacent to or even part of the older towns they were nevertheless on the fringe of these towns. In Glasgow for example most of the mining was either in the north and west of the city at Springburn, Maryhill andJordanhill or to the south and east at Rutherglen, Shettleston, Baillieston and

Cambuslang. The pits in Kilmarnock district were to be found mostly to the north and east at Galston, Hurlford and Newmilns or to the south at Caprington. The same can be said about Hamilton until about 1870 for there was little mining near the centre of the town until after that year. It was to be found instead in small neighbouring villages such as Quarter, Low Waters and Ferniegair. Even in these cases then, there was a measure of 'separateness' of the miners in the sense that their work-places and their houses tended to be confined to certain areas and not completely dispersed throughout the bigger towns.

Although there was this diversity of types of community there were also some common features. Two of the most important of these emerged from the previous paragraphs, their separate and clear identity as mining communities and their rapid rate of growth during the decades under consideration. The separateness or even isolation was of particular importance for the emergence of trade unionism. Sociologists have demonstrated that much of the sense of community which is a feature of mining areas derives from the fact that their inhabitants are basically of one class, or even one industry.[22] The sense of community is strengthened by the dangerous but co-operative nature of the work and by the separate nature of the district, village or town. But a strong sense of community was not enough by itself to produce a strong trade union. The small isolated communities like Dalmellington, Cumnock and Shotts prove this by the fact that unions in particular and industrial action in general were never prominent there. In the bigger groups of mining towns or villages on the other hand strikes and union activity thrived - but not in all areas consistently over the period 1842-74. In Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown and Dalry for example there were regular strikes and strong union organisations until the early sixties when these districts became more docile and less active only to be replaced by districts like Wishaw, Larkhall, Hamilton. Glasgow and Kilmarnock remained quite consistent

centres of union organisation throughout the period, partly because they were centres of communication for surrounding districts and quite convenient meeting places and partly because miners there could draw support, encouragement and examples from other industrial workers. The Glasgow iron workers, engineers and the Glasgow Trades Council all provided inspiration and help to the miners.

This sense of community identity also influenced the formulation of the rules of all miners' unions during the period. Although some of these unions were national (British and Scottish) and some were more local in every case there was clear provision for strong initiative and control at local level. The Miners Association of Great Britain and Ireland of 1843, for example, gave rather broad responsibility to the national organisation but emphasised at some length the authority to be given to local district unions.[23] The district unions which emerged in the Clyde Valley were in Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown and Kilmarnock.[24]

The Coal and Iron Miners Association of Scotland, however, whose rules were formulated in 1855 provided for even greater power and control at district level. There were to be district organisations and meetings and considerable discretion given to these in matters of money, entries, clearance and strikes.[25] This decentralisation and devolution of power to district level continued during the sixties with the formation of strong local unions such as the Airdrie Miners Association of 1862 and local unions at Wishaw (1873), Motherwell (1873), Carluke (1873), Larkhall (1874), Hamilton (1874), Stonehouse (1875) and Maryhill (1875). Even the emergence of the National Association of Miners in 1863 with Alexander M cDonald at its head did not seriously reduce the autonomy of district unions. Indeed the association was specifically created to consist of 'as many Districts as may from time to time conform to the following rules'.[26] The rules which followed were essentially those of a federation of district organisations.[27] The conclusion from all of this is that the district was one of the more vital units of trade union organisation and by a

district was meant a town or a village and its surrounding mines for example Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown, Kilmarnock, Wishaw, Maryhill or Hamilton. These communities with their sense of separate identity provided the focus of trade union organisation in West Central Scotland.

The Social and Economic Security of the Miners

Although unemployment seldom threatened the security of these miners Chapter Two has shown that the dangers inherent in the work produced frequent accidents, injuries, illnesses and deaths. Chapter Three showed that miners' living standards varied in a quite unpredictable way because of fluctuations in wages. Working miners who had spent all their pay could often obtain an advance payment before the next pay as several colliery pay books show.[28] The truck store would also give credit to many an indigent miner or his wife, but this along with pay advances tended to sink the miner into deeper debt problems.

Sociologists suggest that where workers are subjected to uncertainty about the level of their incomes, as the Clyde Valley miners were at this period, two extreme attitudes emerge - the very frivolous and the very sober.[29] This theory would appear to fit these miners because of the large numbers who required advance payments even at times of relatively high pays, as at Auchenheath and Craignethan between 1872 and 1874.[30] These men fell into the 'frivolous' category who spent their entire wages apparently with an attitude of 'eat drink and be merry'. There was also a substantial number in the 'very sober' group who put a little money aside regularly as provision against future accidents. The principal means for doing this was through a friendly society of which there were many in the West Central Scotland mining communities. Table 17 lists the main friendly societies in mining communities which registered with the Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies (Scotland) in the eighteen forties up to the seventies, but these were by no means all of the societies which existed during the period.

Table 17 includes a few societies described as 'Annual' friendly societies but these probably outnumbered the continuous or permanent friendly societies. As their name suggests these annual societies divided the funds each year among the members. Andrew Miller of Coatbridge, writing in 1864 commented that 'the yearly societies are more numerous than those on the permanent principle and this probably arises from the fact that a great proportion of the working classes are moving from place to place . . . At the iron work and collieries yearly societies have been in operation for many years past'.[31]

If the migratory nature of miners and their families led to a preference for the yearly societies it also made the permanent ones more difficult to organise and Table 17 shows that numerous societies which existed between 1829 and 1852 had disappeared by 1874. This was to be the fate of several trade unions organised on a similar scale. But although friendly societies were often short-lived the effort to organise them continued - a testimony to the 'very sober' attitude of many miners.

The Carluke Working Men's Friendly Society was typical of the numerous unregistered yearly societies which operated year after year quite successfully. It was formed in 1850, consisting of members 'mainly of the mining and labouring classes', dissolved at the end of each year and by 1857 was still going strong.[32] Each member paid three pence per week in return for which he would receive eight shillings per week if he were temporarily disabled and absent from work for a period of time. There was also a funeral fund within the society, another regular feature of these organisations. The frequency of references to societies like these supports Andrew Miller's evidence about their importance in mining communities.

Those societies which chose to register with the Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies (Scotland) produced sets of rules which predictably had many common features. Their preambles and statements of objects were

often long-winded containing references to 'the infinitely wise Author of nature' and proclaiming that in forming a society its members are 'attracted by the most Charitable motives'.[33]

'Let Charity be our principle

And Brotherly love our guide'

This was the opening flourish of the rules of the Carfin Colliery Society.[34] The object of societies such as these was said to be 'entirely for the purpose of raising a fund to assist in contributing towards the support of its members during sickness and also for defraying the expenses of the funerals of members, and also the funerals of their wives'.[35]

The membership was usually confined to men aged between fifteen and forty five who were in sound health.[36] These men had to pay an entry fee of five shillings to be followed thereafter by monthly payments of one shilling (in most cases).[37] In return for this a member who through illness or infirmity could not go to work was entitled usually, to six shillings per week 'sickness aliment' for three, four or even six months, thereafter to three shillings for a similar period and finally to two shillings for the same period or indefinitely.[38] When a member died funeral money of £3 was paid to his widow or next of kin and a similar sum was paid to any member whose wife died.

The rules of these societies all made careful provision for the reliable and honest administration of the funds. There were large committees usually more than ten strong with elected office bearers namely the President, Treasurer, Clerk and Officer. Society books were sometimes lodged in a box for which only two office-bearers had keys. Woodhall Colliery Friendly Society, near Coatbridge, even insisted that the treasurer could not be 'a retailer of spirits'.[39] There were to be regular, sober committee meetings and annual financial statements.[40]

Douce and cautious societies such as these found favour among many of the more careful, thrifty miners although they were not always run by miners themselves as the article in the Woodhall rules against spirit dealers suggests. A school teacher for example in Calderbank near Coatbridge, James Hair by name acted as secretary to several local friendly societies in Calderbank, Whifflet and in Chapelhall.[41] Some mine owners organised friendly societies among their employees. One of the most long-lasting of them was at Govan Colliery where William Dixon, organised a 'Friendly and Free Labour Society' for which he deducted subscriptions from the miners' pay.[42] An example of a smaller employer setting up a society is provided by the coalmasters Messrs. Brand and Hyslop at Greenhead Colliery Wishaw. In 1867 they made arrangements whereby their miners paid three pence per fortnight into the accident assurance fund. Any miner who was injured in an accident received seven shillings per week for the first three months of his absence from work, five shillings per week during the next three months and two shillings and sixpence for a final three months. A dead miner's family received a payment of £8. But although benefits like these were comparatively generous the societies organised by employers were exceptional. Most societies were run by working men, particularly by miners.

These organisations influenced the growth of trade unions in a number of ways. Friendly societies provided first a model of collective organisation from which trade unions could learn. Secondly they provided experience in leadership and in administration for potential trade unionists. Thirdly their existence highlighted a need among miners which trade unions frequently tried to meet - the need for a measure of economic security.

A particularly clear example of a trade union which modelled its organisation on friendly societies was the Airdrie Coal and Ironstone Miners, Roadsmen and Drawers Association of 1862. Its leader John Devlin explained at its inaugural meeting:

'The society would be to all intent and purposes a friendly society, and as such he believed it would be more easy to preserve it in vigorous operation among the men. But it would also be capable when occasion required, of acting quite as vigorously as a trades' union'.[43]

The rules of Devlin's union were to be based upon those of four local friendly societies, those at Calder, Carnbroe, Calderbank and Chapelhall. Devlin's explanation shows that for him at least the running of a friendly society or a trade union would have many similar objectives. This was no doubt the view of William Cloughan, a very notable example of a trade union leader who also helped to organise a friendly society. He was secretary of Thankerton Colliery Friendly Society up to 1843,[44] experience which probably stood him in good stead as leader of the Holytown miners from 1843 until 1847.

This overlapping of the functions of a friendly society and trade union influenced the formation in the eighteen sixties of the Order of Free Colliers which was basically a friendly society with aspirations to industrial action. Free Colliers Lodges were active in the West of Scotland from 1864 until 1866 a period when trade unionism among the miners was comparatively quiescent.[45] During these years lodges were established at Wishaw, Hamilton, Baillieston, Larkhall, Newarthill, Glasgow, Elderslie and in many other mining communities.[46] In their activities the lodges were flamboyant and often light-hearted. They had dances, processions and outings. They wore sashes and carried flags.[47] These features may be seen as cultural trappings of a growing community consciousness - or even class consciousness - but an essential function of the movement was to provide friendly society benefits. The creation of a national death and accident fund was agreed upon at a mass meeting of Free Colliers delegates held in Glasgow in January 1865.[48] One of these lodges, the Alexander Lodge No. 10 in Larkhall even registered

itself as a friendly society with the Assistant Registrar in 1865, proclaiming in its rules that:

> 'its object shall be to raise a fund in the first place for the support of its members in cases of sickness or disability . . . and in the second place for assisting to defray the expenses of the funeral of members and members' widows, children and parents'.[49]

But the lodges frequently extended their activities beyond the entertainments and friendly societies. The Young Edwin lodge at Wishaw agreed to raise money to repay Alexander McDonald for his trade union services and to clear the debts of the miners' union.[50] The mass meeting of delegates in Glasgow in January 1865 resolved to agitate for an eight-hour day and to raise a fund to support that agitation.[51] Some lodges even became involved in political activity by supporting agitation for parliamentary reform. The Wishaw and Larkhall lodges, for example, took part in a procession and reform demonstration in Hamilton in November 1866.[52]

The Free Colliers can be seen then as part friendly society,part trade union and as such they illustrate the connection which existed between the two forms of organisation. The connection is also demonstrated by the fact that from 1862 until the end of the period all miners unions in the West of Scotland which were formally organised with rules included the provision of friendly benefits among their activities. Some of these unions were national namely the Coal and Ironstone Miners Association of Scotland (1862) the National Association of Miners (1863) and the Coal and Ironstone Miners Mutual Protection Association of Scotland (1866) and they sought to act therefore as federations of local unions. But this did not prevent them from making broad recommendations in their rules that benefit payments were to be made in the event of sickness, accident or death.[53]

The principal local unions of the period, the Airdrie Miners Association (1862) and the registered unions in Wishaw (1873), Motherwell

(1873), Larkhall (1874), Hamilton (1874), Stonehouse (1875) and Maryhill (1875) all made quite specific provision for the payment of such benefits.[54] The sums involved in the Larkhall, Hamilton and Stonehouse unions were comparable to those of the friendly societies quoted earlier. Members paid five shillings entry money and weekly payments of 3½d in return for which a sick or injured miner would receive eight shillings per week for the first three months of absence from work followed by six shillings per week for the next three months then four shillings for three months and finally two shillings and sixpence per week for the last quarter of a year's absence.[55]

But these attempts by unions to take upon themselves the functions of friendly societies were not always successful. The Maryhill miners union decided to abandon the benefit fund part of their organisation by October of 1875. Their secretary Samuel Hughes explained why in a letter to the Assistant Registrar. 'The reason for this step was the great number of Funeral and Friendly Societies in and around Glasgow, and most of them (i.e. miners) being in one or more of these Societies, they considered it would ensure them to have too much to pay'.[56]

Although there were strong connections between friendly societies and trade unions in respect of organisation, membership and some functions yet they could on occasions be in competition. On these occasions, if Samuel Hughes is generally correct and most miners were in one or more friendly societies, then it would appear that the thriftiness and sobriety of the miners tended to favour the friendly societies. They were the principal means by which mining communities established a measure of social and economic security for individual miners and their families. Although they have been described as a form of self-help[57] it was clearly not in the individualist sense in which Samuel Smiles used the expression.[58] The collectivism of friendly societies and their popularity in mining districts is another illustration of the co-operative community identity

of these towns and villages.

The Physical and Cultural Environment of Mining Communities

The term 'environment' has been given a very broad meaning in the second half of the twentieth century. It has come to refer not simply to landscape, buildings and general surroundings but also to fundamental features of the way of life of the people. This wider interpretation is both justified and illuminating because it implies an inter-relationship between physical and social or cultural environments. In the context of the West of Scotland mining communities between 1842 and 1874 this use of the term can help to provide understanding of several relevant features of the way of life of the miners.

It follows from comments made earlier in this chapter about different types of mining communities that some were set in rural areas while others were more urban and surrounded by industries. On balance the rural settings were more common and this closeness of nature and the country-side influenced the attitudes of miners like the Keir Hardie who worked in Newarthill and in Quarter during the sixties and seventies. For Hardie and for Thomas Stewart of Larkhall the rural idyll contrasted sharply with the oppressive gloom and dirt of the pit.[59]

But although the setting of these villages or towns may often have been in pleasant rolling meadows and leafy hedgerows the settlements themselves were far from idyllic. They were dominated by pit buildings, shafts and waste heaps. Railway lines, viaducts and sidings dissected even the smaller villages. Their most notable feature in the opinion of contemporary observers was the miners' housing. Although the standards of housing varied such is the weight and frequency of contemporary criticism that it is clear that a very substantial number of miners and their families were obliged to live in exceptionally bad conditions. The Commissioner for Mining Districts described the dirt and squalor of miners' rows around Holytown in 1844.[60] He made regular criticisms of the style

of building miners' houses in rows or squares in order to reduce construction costs and he argued that this type of housing did not encourage habits of cleanliness and comfort.[61] Cramped and insanitary housing conditions at Rosehall near Coatbridge helped to produce an outbreak of cholera there in the summer of 1854 which led to twenty seven deaths. Tremenheere reported that the houses owned by the ironmasters Messrs Addie, Miller and Rankin were badly ventilated, too small and lacked a water supply.[62]

A series of reports in the Glasgow Herald between January and March 1875 describing miners' housing in Maryhill, Jordanhill, Knightswood, Faskin, Carfin, Mossend and Galston again referred to overcrowded and unsanitary conditions characterised by dirt and dampness.[63]

But not all the miners' housing was of this standard. There are examples of rows or streets of houses which are still occupied and which can be seen to be structurally sound, clean and comfortable. The one and two-storey houses on the Main Street Holytown, for example, or those in McNeill Street and neighbouring streets in Larkhall are in this category, as the photographs, Figures 7 and 8 show. It must be added, however, that some of this housing was originally built for weavers.

Both Tremenheere and Thomas Tancred who reported to the Children's Employment Commission in 1842 found examples of commendable housing built by mine owners for their workers. In the opinion of both men the Portland Iron Company's houses near Kilmarnock were the best in Ayrshire and among the best in the West of Scotland.[64] They each had an upper storey, a scullery, conveniences, coal storage and gardens front and back. The Portland Iron Company became part of the extensive empire of Messrs Baird of Gartsherrie and it was some of Bairds housing for other collieries which Tremenheere praised most consistently. He was particularly enthusiastic about some newly-built homes at their Eglinton Works near Dalry each of which had a kitchen and one, two or even three

bedrooms.[65] Bairds'housing at Kilsyth, Gartsherrie and Kilwinning all received favourable mention for their drainage, water supplies, gardens and measures to encourage cleanliness and prevent overcrowding.[66] At Gartsherrie in 1851 the average number of occupants per house was 5.2 in houses which in most cases had one or two bedrooms. Tremenheere selects this situation for particular praise and it clearly represented a higher standard than obtained in most miners' housing.

Among other ironmasters whom the Commissioner selected for special mention in this respect were the Houldsworths who controlled Coltness Iron Company and Dalmellington Iron Company. Their miners' houses at Coltness were commended for their cleanliness and privacy as well as for their water supply and gas lighting.[67] The occupants were encouraged by the company to tend their gardens, as they were at Dalmellington. Later Coltness houses were built to a design, selected by the company from two architects' plans which were submitted. They were two-storey houses with kitchen, one or two bedrooms and outhouses for coal storage.[68]

In spite of the fact that some housing, in particular that provided by Baird and Houldsworth was reported to be clean, sanitary and of adequate size, the homes of probably a majority of miners in the Clyde Valley were dirty and small, even by the standards of the period. And yet housing standards appear to have had little direct effect on trade union policy among the mining population. The issue is not mentioned as a grievance at times of strike or any other form of agitation. The speeches of miners' leaders contain virtually no reference to the evils of the miners' rows. This does not mean, however, that housing had absolutely no relevance to industrial relations. It was a powerful weapon in the hands of the employers which they could use in two ways, as ashort term measure to end strikes by evicting strikers from their houses and as a long term form of paternalist social control by enforcing regulations upon the occupants.

The use of eviction as a strategy to oppose strikes had some advantage from the employers' point of view. It was legal and was therefore often enforced by local sheriff courts. Furthermore it could bring strong pressure to bear on strikers through the hardship it could cause. Miners' families had sometimes to camp in neighbouring fields as they did at Lugar in Ayrshire in August 1847 and at Airdrie in August 1870.[69] The greater hardships in winter months could quickly bring strikers to heel and the effectiveness of the strategy is shown in the fact that employers used it quite frequently. Between 1842 and 1874 there were at least eighteen reports of eviction of strikers and their families.[70]

Some mine owners tried to exercise a measure of social control over their employees by their policy of allocating houses, by the regulations which went with them and by general inducement and cajoling of the occupants. Bairds who were among the most paternalist of employers regularly evicted tenants from their houses in order to replace them with others whom they wished to employ.[71] They made a particular point of having bad tenants evicted.[72] Bairds' rules affecting their houses included forbidding dogs, pigs and poultry in company houses, a rule which was strictly enforced.[73] Messrs. Houldsworth provided a particularly remarkable example of paternalist policy in their houses at Coltness. They provided gas lighting in each house to encourage the miners to stay at home in the evenings instead of going out to a public house. But they also turned the gas off at 10.00 p.m. to encourage an 'early to bed' habit among their employees.[74]

Several of the employers provided gardens with their houses and encouraged the occupants to tend them and to keep them tidy. Some even offered prizes for the best kept gardens. This was part of a general policy of persuasion used by the owners to have their property kept clean and tidy.[75]

Although the encouragement of gardening and the insistence upon cleanliness, no animals and lights out at ten o'clock can hardly be described as an anti-union regime nevertheless it created an atmosphere of control, conformity, obedience and in short paternalism which was difficult for miners to resist and which worked against the spirit of collective self-defence which is part of trade unionism. This helps to explain why Bairds were so successful in controlling their workforce and in having less industrial unrest and strikes than most other employers.

The employers' paternalism influenced other features of the social or cultural environment of mining communities especially education and religion. Thomas Tancred in 1842 deplored the lack of education and of religious leadership in the mining districts of the West of Scotland[76] and this was an opinion which Tremenheere could endorse. He believed that education could provide the remedy to most of the troubles among the miners as in his view it would prevent revolution, strikes and other subversive activities.[77] This was clearly one of the purposes of the library provided for the workers in 1842 at Gatehead Colliery near Kilmarnock by the then owner the Duke of Portland. One of the library rules was 'it shall consist of books fitted to promote the intellectual, moral and religious improvement of the readers; nor shall any book containing unsound opinions or having a dangerous tendency be admitted.'[78]

During the forties and fifties the number of schools in mining villages increased and predictably it was the most paternalistic employers, especially ironmasters who provided them. Schools were built in the forties and fifties at Dundyvan near Coatbridge, at Omoa near Wishaw, at Monkland Iron Works near Coatbridge, at Gartsherrie and at Glengarnock in Ayrshire all put there by ironmasters.

Children who lived near and could attend schools like these, or alternatively local parish schools were subjected to a variety of curricula but in most schools basic literacy and numeracy were the main objectives

of the teachers. At Gartsherrie school there were singing lessons and religious services and at Omoa there was strong emphasis on dictionary work, set reading passages and homework.[79]

Several employers also provided evening classes from 7.00 until 9.30 p.m. for miners, especially boys or youths who had been down the pits from 6.00 a.m. until 4.00 or 5.00 p.m. Bairds of Gartsherrie were among these employers and they also ran an Industrial School and Boarding House which provided supervised, disciplined accommodation for single men along with a school of cookery for girls who had left day school.[80] The establishment was run on strict orderly lines with numerous prohibitions such as intemperance, smoking, loitering and profane language.

It is more than likely that Bairds shared the opinion of Robert Brown, principal agent on the estates of the Duke of Hamilton who wrote in 1851 a letter to the Duchess of Hamilton arguing that more education, and in particular female education would help to reform the mining population and make them less prone to strike or restrict their output and more inclined to work hard.[81] It would be difficult to prove or disprove Brown's case with reference to the period up to 1874. It can be argued in his favour, for example, that the great educators Bairds of Gartsherrie were subjected to fewer strikes than other comparable employers but not necessarily because of their education policy alone. From the other side it can be shown that although schools were increasing in number in the region so too were strikes and other forms of industrial action. Employers could claim that the availability of schools helped 'lads o' pairts' among the miners to raise themselves and gain promotion within the industry, perhaps to the level of manager.[82] But not all 'lads o' pairts' took that avenue of advancement. Alexander McDonald and Keir Hardie were examples of miners who through their own ability and endeavour and through the education which they acquired first in mining districts became union leaders. The schools did not always

succeed in providing a submissive workforce and in some cases they produced the opposite result.

Employers who saw it as part of their function to provide moral guidance used a variety of other tactics. Houldsworth's Dalmellington Iron Company forbade the sale of spirits in the area of their works. Only beer was permitted in an effort to reduce drunkenness.[83] Bairds supported the activities of the Total Abstinence Society among their miners and they also provided lectures and concerts during winter months.[84] Some saw the church as a source of moral leadership for their workers and they encouraged and co-operated with the clergy to this end. In Quarter, for example, the ironmasters Colin Dunlop and Company who had built the village schoolroom were responsible for establishing regular Church of Scotland services in the building and for paying part of the salary of the first minister from 1861 onwards.[85] Messrs Bairds encouraged missionary work among their miners by a local Church of Scotland minister Rev. Bell who supported their efforts to encourage cleanliness and tidiness in the company houses and held religious services in the company school,[86] just as the minister did at Quarter.

The allegiance of West of Scotland Protestant miners to the Church appears to have been somewhat uneven. Table 18 gives membership figures for a selection of churches in six quite different kinds of mining community namely Wishaw, Airdrie, Hamilton, Quarter and Holytown in Lanarkshire and Dalmellington in Ayrshire. Of these churches the ones with the highest proportion of miners as members were Quarter, Holytown Free and Carsphairn and Dalmellington Free, all in comparatively small mining communities. The two Free churches appear to have been stronger among the miners than Quarter Church in several respects. The attendance of miners at communion at Quarter church was irregular in many cases and there were no miners who were elders in that church.[87] In Holytown Free church, two of the six elders were miners[88] and at Carsphairn and

Dalmellington Free Church one of the seven elders was a miner as were three of the eight deacons.[89]

In the village of Dalmellington there was a particularly marked contrast between miners' support for the Free church and for the Church of Scotland. Nor was the Church of Scotland well supported by miners in Hamilton during this period. In the two main churches in the town there were almost as many coalmasters as miners on the roll.[90] This was partly because these churches are near to the centre of Hamilton while until the early seventies most miners lived on the edges of the town, perhaps two or three miles from the churches.

At New Monkland Parish Church on the northern edge of Airdrie the coalmasters again outnumbered the miners. It is in this churchyard that Alexander McDonald is buried and although the church had traditionally been supported by agricultural workers for miles around it did not attract the support of miners. This provides a marked contrast with Wishaw Old Parish Church in the fifties at a time when the town's growth based upon mining was particularly rapid.

Table 18 shows sufficient variation in church membership to suggest that the Church of Scotland in particular did not have great strength and influence in several mining communities. Even miners' support for the Free churches varied from place to place. To this it must be added that there is very little evidence from other sources of any strong religious allegiance among Protestant miners in the region. Nor is there evidence of these churches playing the significant part in miners' affairs which religion did in mining districts in England, for example in the Midlands where Primitive Methodism held sway among the miners.[91]

A substantial proportion of West of Scotland miners were, however, Catholics but there are virtually no figures available to show their level of commitment and allegiance to the Catholic church. It seems

likely that in areas where Catholic churches existed there was a high level of support among miners, proportionally higher than was given to the Church of Scotland.[92] But Catholic churches were only beginning to be built during this period in the mining districts. In 1855 for example there were only three in the north of Lanarkshire, in Airdrie, Hamilton and Rutherglen and in 1857 a Mission was established in Carluke. In the same year a Catholic school was erected in Chapelhall and Mass was said there every Sunday by a priest from Airdrie.[93] It was not until 1865, that the Scottish Catholic Directory recorded that 'arrangements are being made to erect a chapel at Holytown'.[94] The chapel was built in 1868 at Mossend between Holytown and Bellshill and it served the Catholic mining population for miles around. So by the late sixties there were still comparatively few Roman Catholic churches in mining communities. Although these churches were each important additions to the social environment of the communities in which they were built, there is little to suggest that they had any effect on trade unionism or on industrial relations on the mining industry during that period.

Perhaps the most common feature of the environment of all mining commjnities was the public house as drinking was a social activity of major importance for the miners. Although local trade union meetings were often held in establishments such as the 'Cup and Flat' in Airdrie in the Commercial Inn in Wishaw or in the Hamilton Arms Inn in Hamilton many union rules included measures to prevent drunkenness at meetings.[95]

As these communities settled and found identities collective activities like bands, banners and processions were organised. Some like Quarter even had a fair. This was described by the poet-miner David Wingate in a poem written in the eighteen seventies.

'When a' the Duke's folks wi' the Quarter
conneckit
Prepared for the fun o' their ain yearly Fair.

I saw the flags wavin' by stout limmers
carried
Wha' laboured wi' laughter and blushes
fu' rare . . .
I saw the parade wi' three flashin'swords
pointed.
Glaur Tam at the head o' them
was there.
But fearnae that croons will be cloven
or crunted,
For Peace was aye Queen at the Quarter
folks' Fair.
Far echoed the weel-lippit trumpets
o' Larky
Though aft tipsy discord threw in a
wild blare.
Sair wrinkled ere lang were the braw
silken sashes
And loose and mair loose grew ilk
flag maiden's hair'.99

The poem with its references to flags, sashes, the neighbouring Larkhall band ('weel lippit trumpets o' Larky') and to a local worthy 'Glaur Tam' (an old collier who cleaned the roads) describes many of the characteristics of the mining community. At least one Quarter Colliers' Friendly Society sash from the early nineteenth century still survives in Hamilton District Museum and numerous miners' banners and flags from the whole region still exist.[97]

The unions were often a part of this kind of community entertainment and they organised outings for thousands of miners and their families to Ayr in 1860 and to Stirling in 1861. Train loads of people accompanied

by bands left from Glasgow, Motherwell, Holytown, Coatbridge and Baillieston.[98] In October 1862 there was an excursion to Glasgow at the City Hall, [99] while in 1863 Ayr was the meeting place once more.[100] On all of these occasions there was singing, usually of patriotic songs, and brass band competitions, culminating with 'God Save the Queen'.

Some union leaders being members of the 'sober' rather than the 'frivolous' section of the mining population saw it as their duty to try to improve the life-style of their members by occasional warnings to consume less liquor and be more concerned with the finer things of life.[101] In February 1857 Alexander McDonald was on the platform of a meeting at Mason's Hall, Holytown which was got up for the purpose of elevating the tastes of the workmen.[102] It was an evening of improving speeches and of songs but 'unfortunately . . . two songs were sung of such a character as to call for a strong expression of indignation on the part of the speakers on the platform and the respectable portion of the audience'. If mining communities consisted of a 'respectable' or 'sober' portion and a 'frivolous' portion the union had to serve both and this kind of cultural improvement was not a policy which it tried very often.

Conclusion

The diversity and divisions within the mining population of the West of Scotland were extensive. Thousands of people from various economic backgrounds came to live in the growing communities bringing different religions, values and cultures together. The common experience of work and community life helped to give them a measure of unity and in this trade unions played a part in spite of opposition from employers and difficulties of organising this kind of workforce. The unions sprang from the local communities and some of their institutions like friendly societies. But many features of the mining towns and villages militated against combination such as the mobility of miners' families and the employers' control of houses. Although schools and churches

were being built in increasing numbers often by employers they seem to have had little effect on industrial relations during this period in spite of the fact that some employers saw them as means of making their workforce more peaceful and more submissive.

As new villages became established and acquired their own identities there appeared processions with bands, banners and sashes. These were symbols of a community feeling which was generated more often by the pub and the friendly society than by the school or the church and it was this community feeling in its more sober moments which produced and sustained trade unions.

Chapter Four - Notes

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3. Census Records 1841 - Enumerator's Returns for Ayrshire, Parish of Dalry section 587 districts 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 15 and for Lanarkshire Parish of Old Monkland section 652 districts 12 and 36, New Register House, Edinburgh
4. Fred Reid, 'The Independent Collier' New Edinburgh Review (1975 no number) 31
5. J.E. Handley The Irish in Modern Scotland (Cork 1947) 320
6. Alan Campbell 'Honourable Men and Degraded Slaves, a Comparative Study of Trade Unionism in Two Lanarkshire Mining Communities 1841-71' Bulletin of Society for Study of Labour History No. 28 (Spring 1974) 9-10
7. Census 1841, Enumerator's Return for Bothwell Parish (625) Holytown district 10, New Register House
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9. Glasgow Sentinel 8 January 1853; Rules of Hamilton Miners' Mutual Protection Association 1874, Friendly Society Records SRO, FS 7/12
10. Hamilton Advertiser 17 January 1863
11. Hamilton Advertiser 4 May 1867
12. D. Bremner Industries of Scotland (Edinburgh 1869) 20
13. Hamilton Advertiser 20 April 1867
14. Children's Employment Commission 1842 (381) xvi, App. to 1st Rep. 364-8
15. Youngson Brown, The Scots Coal Industry 195
16. Glasgow Sentinel, 13 October 1855

See below p.219

17. E.J. Hobsbawm, 'The Tramping Artisan' in Labouring Men (London 1964) 34-63

18. Articles of Scottish Iron Moulders' Union (Glasgow 1860) 36, articles XL, XL1, XL11; Minutes of Scottish Iron Moulders' Union delegate meetings 27 August 1840, N.L.S., Edinburgh

19. Hamilton Advertiser 16 August 1862, 23 July 1870

20. Rules of Amalgamated Coal Miners' Mutual Protection Society of Wishaw and District, FS 7/35 rule 18, (Wishaw Union)
Rules of Amalgamated Coal Miners' Mutual Protection Society of Motherwell, FS 7/43 rule 18, (Motherwell Union)
Rules of Larkhall Miners' Mutual Protection . . . Associations, FS 7/1 rule 22 (Larkhall Union)
Rules of Hamilton Miners' Mutual Protection . . . Association, FS 7/12 rule 22 (Hamilton Union)
Rules of Stonehouse Miners' Mutual Protection . . . Association, FS 7/34 rule 22 (Stonehouse Union)
Rules of Carluke Miners' Association, FS 7/39 rule 32 (Carluke Union)
Rules of Maryhill Miners' Labour Protection and Benefit Association FS 7/23 rule 18, all in Friendly Society Records, SRO, Register House

21. Letter James Anderson to Registrar of Friendly Societies April 1895 in Friendly Society Records, SRO, FS 7/97

22. Ronald Frankenberg Communities in Britain (London 1965) 122

23. Rules and Regulations of the Miners' Association of Great Britain (Newcastle 1843), Wigan Central Library, 2, rule VIII

24. Miners' Advocate 13 January, 6 March 1844

25. Glasgow Sentinel 13 October 1855 article III

26. General Rules for the Government of the Miners' National Association (Durham 1867) Section 1, G.U.L.

27. General Rules 1867 2nd, 3rd and 4th objects

28. Govan Colliery Pay Book 1859-61 vol. P7, 31 December 1859, 51; Auchenheath Colliery Pay Book 1872-4 D/16/20/5 University of Glasgow, Department of Economic History
29. Frankenberg, Communities in Britain 123
30. Auchenheath and Craignethan Colliery Journals 1872-4 D/16/20/2 304, University of Glasgow, Department of Economic History
31. Andrew Miller, The Rise and Progress of Coatbridge (Glasgow 1864) 82-3
32. Hamilton Advertiser 19 February 1857
33. Articles and Regulations of Airdrie Miners'Society 1832 in Friendly Society Records, SRO FS 1/16/9
34. Articles and Regulations of Carfin Colliery Friendly Society 1839 in Friendly Society Records SRO FS 1/16/29
35. Articles of Airdrie Miners' Friendly Society Article I SRO, FS 1/16/9
36. Articles of Airdrie Miners Friendly Society, art. II SRO, FS 1/16/9
37. Articles of Airdrie Colliers'Friendly Society 1840 FS 1/16/4
    Articles and Regulations of Woodhall Colliery Friendly Society 1846 FS 1/16/22, both in Friendly Society Records SRO
38. Articles of Airdrie Colliers'Friendly Society 1840 FS 1/16/4
    Articles of the Ballochney Miners and Coal Hewers'Friendly Society FS 1/16/19
    Articles and Regulations of Carnbroe Colliery Friendly Society FS 1/16/21
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39. Woodhall Colliery Friendly Society Articles 1846 FS 1/16/22 article 13, SRO, Register House
40. Articles and Regulations of Airdrie Miners'Friendly Society in Friendly Society Records, SRO FS 1/16/9 articles VIII, X
41. Deposition by James Hair, Calderbank 1847 and letter William A.

Nichol to Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies (Scotland) December 1852 both in Friendly Society Records FS 1/16/24, 25, SRO

42. Govan Colliery Pay Book 1859-61, Glasgow University Department of Economic History

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Letter W. Jardine, Gartsherrie to Robert Weir contractor 21 March 1870 in Gartsherrie Letter Book 21 p716,, Coatbridge Public Library

72. Report of Commissioner . . . on Mining Districts 1848 (993) 15

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81. Letter R. Brown to Duchess of Hamilton 2 January 1851 appendix to Report of Commissioner . . . on Mining Districts 1851 (1406) 49-53

82. Miller, Rise and Progress of Coatbridge 193

83. David L. Smith, The Dalmellington Iron Company (Newton Abbot 1967) 52

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85. Letter Robert Brycewalker, Lanarkshire House, Glasgow to Rev. S. Stewart Manse of Quarter, 22 January 1935 in possession of Rev. Stoddart, Manse of Quarter

86. Report of Commissioner . . . on Mining Districts 1851 (1406) 36

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87. Quarter Church, Communicants Roll Book 1881, manse at Quarter

88. Holytown Free Church,Communicants Roll Book 1845-90 SRO, Register House CH 3/478/14

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90. Hamilton Parish Church,Communion Roll Book 1838-64 and Auchingramont Church Communion Roll 1861-4 both in Parish Church office, Hamilton

91. J.E. Williams, The Derbyshire Miners (London 1962) 76

92. This point is based upon the comments of Canon Cahill of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Hamilton who had many years experience as parish priest in several Lanarkshire mining communities when the industry was still in existence there. I am grateful for his advice.

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94. Holy Family Centenary Brochure 11

95. Rules of Wishaw Miners' Union 1873 FS 7/35 rule 21

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96. David Wingate, Selected Poems and Songs (Glasgow 1890) 190-2

97. 'Banner Bright' an Exhibition of Trade Union Banners from 1821 mounted in Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum August-September 1974

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99. Hamilton Advertiser 1 November 1862

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Chapter Five

A Narrative Account of Trade Unionism among the Miners of West Central Scotland I 1842-1855

Change and growth in the mining industry and population described in earlier chapters made the course of trade unionism among the men uneven, at times confused and occasionally almost non-existent. It is the purpose of this and the next chapter to chart that course and to plot the main periods of growth, confusion or decline. Although the importance of communities or districts as the basis for union organisation has been emphasised in Chapter Four, some of the principal events in the story took place when national unions were formed. These were the Miners Association of Great Britain in 1842, the National Association of United Trades in 1845, the Coal and Iron Miners' Association of Scotland in 1855 and the National Association of Miners in 1863. The rise and fall of each of these unions in the region and the emergence towards the end of the period of a number of formally organised district unions will be described and discussed.

Developments up to 1842

As Scots colliers emerged from the serfdom which had been their lot until 1799 one of their first attempts at a formally organised trade union in the West of Scotland took place in 1816-17. The union was called the Glasgow and Clydesdale Association of Operative Colliers and two leaders John Folhous Wilson and Charles Banks were eventually arrested in Ayrshire in November 1817.[1] The indictment brought against them describes how 'during the years 1816 and 1817, great numbers of operative colliers, resident in various places in the counties of Ayr and Lanark . . . did wickedly and illegally combine and conspire together for the purpose of compelling their masters or employers to raise their wages . . . and to impose upon their masters or employers, and upon other workmen or

artificers arbitrary and illegal rules and regulations.[2] At meetings of delegates held at Tollcross in Lanarkshire and at Irvine, Stewarton, Dundonald and Kilmarnock in Ayrshire money was collected to defray expenses, office-bearers were appointed and paid and oaths of secrecy were administered.[3] A set of rules was drawn up, printed and formally approved at Stewarton in October 1817 but with the arrest of Wilson and Banks in the following month the union disintegrated.[4]

After the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824 a meeting of colliers from twenty seven Ayrshire mines was held in Kilmarnock on 25 October 1824 at which it was resolved to form a union to be called the Ayrshire Colliers'Association.[5] Although these miners required considerable fortitude and determination to form a union even in 1824, their attitude appears to have been restrained and moderate. According to the preamble to the union's rules it was being formed 'for the general good of the trade' and the Ayrshire colliers were exhorted to be diligent but moderate in trying to advance their interests.[6] The union was notable also for the detailed thought which went into its organisation but in spite of this it proved to be very short-lived and disappeared soon after 1824.[7]

Another union in Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire appeared in 1824 and although it was successful in securing wage increases it does not appear to have lasted much longer than its Ayrshire counterpart.[8] It seems likely that during these years there were other combinations of miners which did not come to the attention of newspapers or of parliamentary committees or of other contemporary observers.

The temporary nature of these associations was the result partly of the difficulties involved in organising the miners. But it was also because unions were often thought of as short term organisations formed for a specific purpose like a wage demand or a strike. When that purpose had disappeared then the need to combine had gone and the union withered away.

Andrew Miller of Coatbridge suggested that combinations and agitation often began with a meeting of miners at the pit bottom to discuss a specific issue, perhaps a grievance.[9] Ad hoc meetings, like this could give rise to the ad hoc combinations which were sometimes described as unions. When rules were drawn up for the administration of a union, however, its leaders and members obviously aspired to a more long lasting association.

The pattern of short term unions continued during the thirties. Rev. Dr. James Begg, parish minister of New Monkland wrote in 1836 that unions and associations were frequent occurrences among the colliers of his parish. 'They keep trades people in a constant state of agitation and make them spend much of their time and money in attending their frequent meetings.'[10]

There was a particularly widespread organisation of Lanarkshire miners for a strike in 1837 which began soon after the cotton spinners' strike. Sir Archibald Alison estimated that 16,000 Lanarkshire colliers were involved 'the whole adult males of whom were organised in trades unions to the leaders of which they yielded implicit obedience'.[11] Alison's estimate was a gross exaggeration, there being fewer than 10,000 miners in Lanarkshire even by 1841. But the strike, organised by a committee in Airdrie was a violent one and was suppressed by military force. After this as usual the structure of union organisation collapsed until the next period of agitation.[12]

The Miners' Association of Great Britain

During 1842 organisation and combination among Clyde Valley miners began to revive as a result of several stimuli, in particular the Chartist movement and agitation leading to the widespread strike in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. During January, February and March a series of miners' meetings were held in mining towns and villages in Lanarkshire

under the auspices of what became known in the Coal Miners' Chartist Association.[13] The principal speakers at these meetings included Duncan Robertson from Mansfield colliery in Cumnock, John McLay from Coatbridge and John Muir from Glasgow. As well as disseminating Chartist ideas the meetings provided a forum for discussion of industrial issues. At a large delegate meeting at Baillieston in February McLay and Muir proposed ' that the miners get up a press and journal or newspaper of their own, where the grievances of the miner could be pointed out'.[14] The suggestion was taken up by William Cloughan of Holytown and he proceeded to produce The Colliers' and Miners' Journal.[15] This included reports of miners' meetings as well as correspondence on matters of industrial interest to miners such as the 'free line' or 'clearance' system.[16]

Although these Chartist meetings undoubtedly stimulated co-operation and communication among the miners the prevailing tone of the industrial discussions could only be described as moderate. When a proposal was put forward at a Coatbridge meeting on 3 March that miners should pursue a policy of reducing stocks of coal by reducing output it was opposed by McLay who argued that it 'would tend to enrage our employers at us'.[17] He proposed instead that they should hold an outdoor meeting every Thursday for which all men would have an idle day. The proposal was carried and it was one of the few occasions when such a meeting produced industrial action. Other meetings tended to produce resolutions in support of the People's Charter or petitions for Ashley's Miners Bill or a just weighing system. One meeting at Ballochney where a large number of Irish miners were present ended with three cheers for the Charter and three cheers for the repeal of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland.[18]

But although Chartism provided the launching ground for a new organisation of Clyde Valley miners in 1842 the real 'take-off' came with the strike which began in August. By its extent and its violence it

marked, apparently a new degree of group consciousness among the miners and a more extensive organisation than had ever existed before. The organisation was based upon district strike committees with occasional meetings of delegates from several districts and regular mass meetings of strikers.[19] Although the leadership of the strike was loose and often ineffective it nevertheless constituted a framework of district organisations some of which were maintained by the Miners' Association of Great Britain.

The Association was formed in Yorkshire in December 1842 but it was intended to combine all British miners[20] and in July 1843 two lecturers were appointed to establish the union in Scotland. They were William Daniels of Midlothian and William Hammond of Sunderland.[21] But little headway was made in the West of Scotland until William Cloughan of Holytown became actively involved from September 1843 onwards. He was to prove a mainstay of the association and by his tenacity and diligence it survived in the Clyde Valley long after it had withered away elsewhere.

At a large meeting of miners of Glasgow, Coatbridge and Holytown districts held at Tollcross on the Clyde in September there was a speech by Hammond about the union and one by Cloughan about miners' grievances. The discussion which followed concentrated on truck and the injusticies of the weighing systems used for miners' output and when Hammond pressed the question about organising the union Cloughan replied that first there would have to be consultations at the various pits.[22] This may have been simply a method of delaying a decision but since Cloughan himself was committed to the union, as his later actions showed, it is more likely that he genuinely believed that organisation and combination must be agreed by the miners themselves. But even at that point there existed a framework of organisation which arranged inter-district meetings such as the one at Tollcross. Glasgow district miners had a secretary named William McNee and all the mining districts were organised sufficiently

to send delegates to meetings at Coatbridge on 14 September and Glasgow on 21 September.[23] At these meetings, however, the discussion was about petitions against the weighing system and about reducing output as a method of industrial action, not about the formalities of union organisation. It was this informal combination, a sequel to the strike of the previous year which the Miners' Association had to absorb.

When Benjamin Embleton, another lecturer from the North East of England came to proselytise on the union's behalf in the West of Scotland in late September Cloughan joined him in a lecture tour of Lanarkshire mining communities. Embleton had begun in Ayrshire in the Cumnock district where he succeeded in enrolling a substantial number of members.[24] His Lanarkshire tour with Cloughan began at Airdrie on 29 September followed by a series of meetings some of them particularly well attended such as the one at Pottery Quarry Coatbridge on 2 October when an estimated number of three thousand were present all agreeing to join the union.[25] After a meeting of delegates from the Lanarkshire districts on 6 October one thousand membership cards and 1,300 copies of the Association's rules were ordered to meet the anticipated demand.[26]

Embleton and Cloughan's missionary work continued into November and they sent reports in diary form to the union's newspaper The Miners' Advocate. These reports described the working conditions and industrial relations in the various mining towns and villages which they visited. They often found that conditions were particularly bad in more isolated communities such as Greengairs.

> 'Nov. 8 - Visited Greengairs, an iron-stone work in the upper end of Airdrie District, and had a good meeting in a large smith's shop. Dis-union here had also made its ravages. The miners were working at a low rate; we found the average wage to be 2s 6d per day, the hours of labour about twelve and the men liable to have their hutches condemmed if a bit of blaes was found sticking to

the stone. The men are settled with every two weeks but very few of them ever have any money to get as the truck-shop belonging to the contractor (Buttie) Mr. Jack swallows up it all. At the close of the meeting the whole of the Miners and Drawers present unanimously resolved to join the Union, as a number of them had already done and also appointed a committee to draw up their entries and pay the money into their District Treasurer.'[27]

As a result of the efforts of Embleton and Cloughan the Association was firmly established in the three main Lanarkshire mining districts, Airdrie, Coatbridge and Holytown. At a delegate meeting in Airdrie on 17 November union subscriptions came in from twenty-two pits in the district and ten pits in Holytown district sent subscriptions to their district delegate meeting on 18 November.[28] When the Association held a National Conference at Manchester on 2-3 January 1844, membership numbers for Lanarkshire were reported as follows

Holytown	800 members
Coatbridge	600 members
Airdrie	1,000 members[29]

No membership figures were quoted for Ayrshire where, in spite of Embleton's early success in Cumnock the union took longer to establish itself. In November two new lecturers were appointed to work in Ayrshire, Robert McCully and Septimus Davis from the north east of England.[30] They began the same process of touring, lecturing and persuading which Embleton and Cloughan had successfully used in Lanarkshire. On 11 December Davis addressed a large meeting of miners of Kilbirnie and Dalry districts and soon arrangements were made for regular delegate meetings at which all Ayrshire mining districts would be represented.[31] By March 1844 it was reported that 'the miners of Ayrshire are now flocking to the standard of Union from all corners of the county'[32] and payments were made to the union for miners in Gatehead, Hurlford, Kilbirnie, Kilwinning and other mines

around Dalry, Kilmarnock, Cumnock and Ayr.[33] In addition to increasing union membership in Ayrshire these meetings discussed industrial policies such as cutting working hours and restricting output.[34] When the Glengarnock miners were locked out and threatened with eviction in April McCully helped to organise a local committee to support them and in the same month a Law and Victim Fund was set up to finance legal action on behalf of victimised miners.[35] By the time of the next National Conference of the Miners Association which began in Glasgow on 25 March 1844 there was a reported membership from 'Kilmarnock (Ayrshire)' of 1074.[36]

In Lanarkshire Embleton continued his peregrinations among the miners of Airdrie, Coatbridge and Holytown and he travelled into the neighbouring districts of Baillieston to the West and Wishaw to the South during January of 1844.[37] At the National Conference in Glasgow in March 1844 an important expansion of Lanarkshire membership was announced with the addition of the Glasgow district which professed seven hundred members.[38] In Coatbridge district the membership had risen to eight hundred while Airdrie remained at one thousand and Holytown eight hundred. The four principal mining districts of Lanarkshire were now quite strongly connected to the Association with a total memberhip between them of 3,000 if the figures quoted at the Glasgow conference are to be believed. In 1841 the number of miners in Lanarkshire was 9,634,[39] a figure which undoubtedly increased by 1844. A reasonable estimate might be that the membership in 1844 accounted for about thirty per cent of the Lanarkshire miners. The proportional membership in Ayrshire was probably higher as the 'Kilmarnock (Ayrshire)' figure quoted of 1076 was over forty per cent of the total number of miners in the county in 1841 which was 2,526.[40]

Up to March 1844 the Association was being organised quite separately in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire with different lecturers and separate county delegate meetings. On 2 March however Benjamin Embleton travelled over to Ayrshire to address a county delegate meeting in the King's Arms Inn,

Irvine, and on 4, 5 and 6 March a deputation of miners from Coatbridge and Holytown attended meetings in Dalry, Kilmarnock and Ayr for discussions on restricting miners' output - the 'darg' policy.[41] At these meetings there was general agreement that the policy should be adopted so that coal stocks might be reduced and prices and wages raised.

It was at the Glasgow Conference in March 1844 that the Clyde Valley miners first entered into lengthy exchange of views with their counterparts from other British coalfields. The national development of the Association and its conference issues have been very adequately described by Challinor and Ripley[42] but the role of the West of Scotland delegates at the Glasgow Conference requires more attention here. This was the point in the Association's progress when it was strongest in this region, when its membership was at its greatest and most committed to the idea of a British union of miners. Once again the central character in this was William Cloughan. Of all the Scottish delegates he made the most frequent and most decisive contributions to the debates. He spoke on a number of relatively small matters such as procedural arrangements for the conference, its statement of objects for the Glasgow municipal authorities, the administration of the Miners' Advocate and the acts of Parliament concerning master and servant.[43] He gave one of the principal lectures at the conference on the subject of the grievances of Scotch miners. But his most weighty contribution was on the subject of a general strike on which he spoke at great length. 'He earnestly entreated the delegates to beware of striking, it would ruin their union, they were not yet in a condition to strike, but he believed they soon would, indeed he was convinced that the time would soon arrive, when they would have sufficient power to regain their rights without striking, providing they had prudence and patience; they must "bide their time" (hear hear).'[44] He went on to warn the men of Northumberland and Durham against striking because of the large stocks of coal ready to be

shipped from Scottish ports which would meet shortages caused by their action. An un-named Lanarkshire delegate supported Cloughan saying that under the circumstances his constituents were opposed to a strike but adding that they would not obstruct any English members who wished to come out. At the end of the debate the vote for a general strike was 23,357 and against it 28,042, a majority of 4,685.[45] On the following day Cloughan proposed a motion which was seconded and passed.

> 'That no county, district or colliery receive the sanction of this Association to redress their grievances by a strike till such times as they are properly organised and their case be properly examined, and receive the consent of the majority of those in Union over the Empire.'

This caution about using the strike weapon was a policy to which Cloughan adhered quite consistently throughout his years as a union leader.

Although the conference was in Glasgow and although Cloughan played a prominent part it could not be said that Scottish issues and Scottish miners dominated its proceedings. Indeed there was at least one hint of separatist feelings behind a resolution proposing that the Scottish districts of the Association should have their own law agent. W.P. Roberts, the existing law agent for the whole union, replied that he would be happy to assist the Scottish miners whether they appointed him as their law agent or not.[46] Although the settlement of that issue was easily postponed the separate interests and organisation of the Scottish districts became clearer during the following months.

Cloughan at first did nothing to encourage any split. On the contrary in April 1844 he issued an appeal to all coal and ironstone miners in Holytown district to donate money in support of their fellow members in Northumberland and Durham who had come out on strike. 'Remember' he wrote ' that if the Miners of Northumberland and Durham are starved into

compliance with their employers'tyrannical measures it will go far to induce employers in other parts of the country to attempt the same.'[47] He was clearly not opposed to strikes on principle but rather on tactical grounds and at that time he was more committed to the British unity of the Association.

During the following months the district organisations in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire continued to function. The Ayrshire delegate meetings recorded subscriptions coming in from more collieries than ever.[48] The Glasgow district organisation issued a public statement in May drawn up by a miner named John Hunter and signed by the district secretary William McNee. It described the hardships of mining, the wickedness of Glasgow mineowners and complained particularly about wages, unjust weighing and truck.[49]

The strength of the Lanarkshire miners' grievances and the unity felt among the four main districts produced a strike which began on 2 June and lasted until early August. The turn-out was agreed upon at a delegates meeting at Baillieston when a statement of demands was drawn up which included a wage of 3s 6d per day, fortnightly pay and just weighing.[50] Cloughan was completely in support of the action and wrote a letter to the Miners' Advocate describing the circumstances and explaining the miners' case.[51] The timing of the action was judicious because coal stocks were low and the coalmasters were first to concede the men's principal demands in July. In August most ironmasters also reached agreement with the strikers and work was resumed. Cloughan argued that this success was the result of the restricted output policy of the Lanarkshire miners during the previous months which had reduced stocks.[52]

As the strike was drawing to a close the committee of the Holytown district miners turned their attention to another persistent source of complaint, the truck system. In a lengthy statement issued from the Committee Rooms Holytown on 10 August 1844 they argued that truck shops

weakened their bargaining position, caused overwork and depressed the living conditions of miners and their families. The statement called upon all Holytown miners to boycott truck shops and offered to provide credit in goods or in cash to any members who were dependent on them or upon receiving cash advanced from their employers.[53] At that point the district committee must have had sufficient funds, organisation and confidence to contemplate such an ambitious and defiant enterprise.

At the same time as the Lanarkshire miners were involved in these struggles they also began to participate in a series of Scottish miners' monthly delegate meetings. The first of these was held in Falkirk on 31 May 1844 and at it Glasgow and Holytown districts were represented but Ayrshire, Coatbridge and Airdrie were absent.[54] It transpired at subsequent meetings that in the three absent districts union organisation had deteriorated. At a Scottish delegate meeting in Falkirk on 30 July it was decided ' that owing to the disorganised state of Ayrshire and Lanarkshire the next meeting will be held on 26 August in Glasgow.'[55] At that meeting it became clear that the area of most extensive union decline and weakness was Ayrshire. Virtually no organisation existed and there were allegations of financial irregularity and intemperate habits against Robert McCully, the Association's lecturer there. The meeting decided to suspend him immediately and to appoint a temporary replacement. The Ayrshire organisation did not really recover however, and even when one of the Scottish delegate meetings was held in Irvine in February of the following year there was still discussion about the need to help the organisation in the county.[56] In spite of the obloquy poured upon McCully it would be unrealistic to believe that he alone was responsible for the union's decline in Ayrshire. The organisation must have been weak and the miners' support inadequate. Perhaps the traditional pattern was asserting itself of short-term combination which falls into desuetude once the need to combine had gone. These were also the years

of very rapid growth of mines and of mining population in Ayrshire as Table 14 has shown. To sustain organisation under these circumstances must have been difficult.

But organisation was successfully sustained in Lanarkshire partly because there were district secretaries who were competent and hard working. William Cloughan in Holytown, William McNee in Glasgow and Thomas Hailstones in Airdrie all attended regularly at the monthly Scottish delegate meetings as well as addressing meetings in their own districts and co-ordinating the agreed union policy of restricting output.[57] Once more the Holytown district was the source of a suggested policy which for the Scottish miners was new and particularly enterprising. At the Scottish delegate meeting in Falkirk in January 1845 it was announced that the Holytown men had begun to raise a fund with payments of threepence per week per man to provide capital to buy land as a co-operative venture.[58] The idea of co-operative ownership was to recur in subsequent unions of West of Scotland miners and this was the first occasion when it was given serious consideration. Nothing seems to have come, however, of that particular attempt. But it was the restricted output or darg policy which was the single most widely agreed form of action implemented by the Scottish miners at that point. At each delegate meeting the extent of the policy was reported and its effectiveness confirmed. In Cloughan's opinion restriction was the central, successful form of action for miners and it was the basis of their union. In a pamphlet published in the following year he argued that it could redress most of the miners' grievances such as low wages, unjust weighing, truck, over-work and lack of education. He disputed in particular the bitter criticisms of the miners made by Seymour Tremenheere in his reports as Commissioner for the Mining Districts.[59]

But in the midst of this varied activity in the Lanarkshire districts and the declining combination in Ayrshire the Miners' Association began

to lose its grip of its Scottish members. The signs of separate aspirations on the part of Scottish miners had been evident for some months particularly with the regular Scottish delegate meetings during 1844 and 1845. It was at one of these meetings that a motion was proposed for the formation of a separate Scottish union. Although the motion was defeated in January 1845 [60] the Association's days in Scotland were numbered. During the following months there was a gradual process of defection of Scottish districts. In the case of Lanarkshire this defection was not the result of declining organisation and membership but rather because the benefits of the union to the comparatively remote but well-financed Scottish districts were being questioned.[61] By the middle of 1845 the Association had no adherents among West of Scotland mining districts and Holytown, the best organised and most active district was now affiliated to another organisation, the National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour.

The Miners' Association had been a new and significant form of organisation in the West of Scotland in a number of respects. It was the first British union with which the miners of the region were associated. With its team of lecturers and its provision for co-operation between districts and counties based upon agreed aims and rules it was the most effectively organised form of widespread combination in which the miners had participated up to that time. It helped to produce leaders of enduring influence such as McNee and Hailstones and particularly Cloughan. It imposed a prevailing ethos of caution and moderation upon the affiliated districts particularly with reference to strikes. Although it sprang from the Chartist movement its development in the Clyde Valley at least had little connection with Chartism. Finally because it lasted for two years in the Clyde Valley it was a new form of combination in that it was more enduring than any of its predecessors.

The National Association of United Trades

From the middle of 1845 until autumn 1846 union activity in most Clyde Valley mining districts was sporadic and infrequent in contrast with the Glasgow district ironmasters who were holding monthly meetings from early 1845.[62] The colliers of Kilbirnie were among the few groups to attempt any industrial action when they submitted a demand for a wage rise of ninepence per day in September.[63] It appears they were unsuccessful.

But as might have been expected an organisation continued to operate in and around Holytown under the leadership of William Cloughan and affiliated to the National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour. This was a very loose confederation of autonomous unions which was set up early in 1845. It was administered by a central committee in London, held annual conferences of delegates and enjoyed the sponsorship and moral leadership of Thomas Slingsby Duncombe M.P. Although it has been suggested that its function was to lobby Westminster and that its existence was 'shadowy'[64] it nevertheless won the complete support of William Cloughan. He represented the Holytown miners at its conference in July 1845 and by November of that year he reported that four hundred members were enrolled in his district.[65] The National Association could be seen to offer greater autonomy to the Holytown miners as well as the possible advantages of combining with different trade unions in the United Kingdom.

Parliamentary lobbying was not its only, nor, as far as the Holytown miners were concerned, its most important function. What turned out to be more important was the raising of funds to help affiliated unions who were on strike, although the central committee regularly professed moderation in its attitudes to industrial action. During March and April 1846 Cloughan organised the collection and the sending on of regular sums of money to support miners on strike in Lancashire and by April William Grocott the Lancashire men's secretary gratefully acknowledged receipt of

a total of £30 from Holytown.[66]

At the annual conference in June Cloughan was elected a provincial member of the central committee and shortly afterwards he became one of the association's directors.[67] In common with the Miners' Association and with the Chartists the National Association adopted a policy of sending agents or lecturers to various industrial regions to win support and new adherents. Accordingly in September 1846 a representative named John Jacobs began a missionary tour of Scotland in the course of which he addressed miners' meetings in Holytown, Wishaw and Airdrie in September, North Glasgow in October and Wishaw again in the following March.[68] These were the earliest occasions when the Wishaw district was acknowledged to be an important mining district from a trade union point of view. Jacobs also spoke at a Lanarkshire miners'delegate meeting in Coatbridge in October 1846. Although the organisation which lay behind these county and Scottish delegate meetings was relatively quiet compared to the vitality shown two years earlier, the meetings were still taking place and were not 'laid on' especially for Jacobs' sake. Scottish delegate meetings were held monthly in centres such as Falkirk and Glasgow.[69] At the Lanarkshire meeting where Jacobs spoke there were several other items of business on the agenda including the important one of admitting drawers into the union. The fact that it was referred to the next Scottish delegate meeting shows both the importance of the issue and the power and influence of the Scottish meeting. Cloughan and Hailstones were prominent speakers at these meetings.

A union structure existed, then, at the level of certain districts in Lanarkshire at county level in Lanarkshire and at Scottish level. It was the aim of Jacobs and of the National Association to do what the Miners' Association had done over three years previously, to gain the support and affiliation of this union.

The local union organisations in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire were

galvanised into action again in July 1847 when most mineowners announced a wage cut of one shilling per day. At a mass meeting of Lanarkshire miners on the banks of the Monkland Canal on 7 July there were large contingents from Holytown, Airdrie and Coatbridge, the last two accompanied by bands. Standing on top of a cart which had been commandeered as a speakers' platform Cloughan denounced the wage cuts as being totally unjustified. Among the other speakers was William Peel an official of the National Association from London who promised to raise a financial levy in support of the men if they came out on strike.[70] The miners did strike and Peel was as good as his word. In August the National Association organised an appeal through the Northern Star on behalf of the Holytown strikers. Although the strike also covered Airdrie, Coatbridge as well as pits in Dalry and Cumnock[71] the appeal always referred to Holytown principally because that was where there were most affiliated members of the association. The appeal was very effective and speeches were made on behalf of the Holytown miners in industrial towns up and down Britain and donations were sent to the central committee in London. By November the total raised was £239 14s 10d.

But by November the strike was over. The men had returned to work in September having accepted the wage cut but having succeeded in preventing the enforcement of the'document', a set of regulations to be signed by employees which would have forbidden meetings and unions.[72] The dispute had been a bitter one, the more so because several employers in Holytown and at Lugar in Ayrshire had miners and their families evicted from company houses. There was very little violence however, the only notable episode being a riot near Dalry when a group of strikers attacked some blackleg miners.[73] One reason for the relative peacefulness of the strike was the amount of union support given to the strikers. In addition to the substantial levy raised by the National Association there was locally organised support particularly in the provision of care and shelter

for evicted families. From the amount of support that was given one newspaper concluded that the union was 'a strong and well-organised' association'.[74]

During this strike a significant change took place in the leadership of the Holytown miners. Cloughan demitted office as secretary in order to take up the function of agent in Scotland for the National Association. He was replaced by John Taylor as Holytown Secretary.[75] During the following months Cloughan travelled around Scotland doing the kind of missionary work which Jacobs had done earlier. He visited Greenock, Aberdeen, Saltcoats, Paisley, Glasgow, Johnstone, Hawick, Galashiels, Vale of Leven, Kinross and Busby.[76] He was also involved directly in industrial relations and in June 1848 he helped to settle a dispute between Edinburgh skinners and their employers.[77]

But the miners remained an important section of Cloughan's membership and in the course of his work he addressed meetings at Airdrie and Newarthill.[78] In the early months of 1848 there was vigorous union activity in these Lanarkshire districts and John Taylor reported that money raised by the National Association had been a source of strength for the miners' union in Holytown.[79] As popular enthusiasm mounted about the revolution in France and about the Chartist activity in February and March several large meetings of miners were held at Airdrie and Coatbridge. At one of these held at Whifflet near Coatbridge a miner named Lees gave a long speech suggesting that the miners might follow the example ofthe French people in overthrowing oppression.[80]

The increased trade union activity which had taken place among Lanarkshire miners in 1847 caused Seymour Tremenheere great concern although he acknowledged that several of the miners' grievances were justified and that industrial relations were being carried on in a more peaceful and conciliatory manner.[81] He even interviewed Cloughan when he was still secretary to the Holytown miners and quoted some of his

remarks at length. This was one of the few occasions when the Commissioner spoke to a representative of the working miners and the care and length which is given to the report of the discussion is a mark of the importance which he attached to Cloughan.[82]

Predictably Cloughan in his statement emphasised the importance of restricted output as a union policy. He also took the opportunity to disagree with some of Tremenheere's earlier criticisms of the effects of unionism and he estimated that 'including all in the union in the county of Lanark there are more than 18,000 colliers, miners, drawers and pitmen of all descriptions'. If his claim was true it meant that almost all mine workers in the county were in the union although only about 500 of these around Holytown were attached to the National Association.[83]

However, in spite of the fact that union activity seemed to be reaching a feverish level with Lees' speech at Whifflet in March 1848 the miners settled back to a period of peace which lasted for over a year during which union organisation was dormant. The National Association also reported a decline in its activities during 1848-9.[84] Cloughan's work in Scotland had stopped and even Holytown miners were no longer affiliated. The decline in trade unionism affected the whole country during 1848-9 and can be related to the cyclical phases of the British economy. This was a trough period and there was a drop in Scottish pig iron prices which in turn affected coal prices and wages.[85] The miners had become aware of the importance of iron and coal prices for their wages and when they felt that a wage cut was unjustified they complained, as Cloughan did in 1847. A corollary of this was their acceptance of existing conditions and wages when prices were low. This acceptance was implicit in the quiescence of the union in 1848-9. Hence the importance attached by union leaders to the restricted 'darg' as a means of depleting coal stocks and therefore of maintaining price levels. These ideas and policies remained central to union organisation among the Clyde Valley miners

throughout our period.

The severing of connections between the Holytown men and the National Association marked the end of another attempt to involve the Clyde Valley miners in a British organisation. Although the association had been active in the region for almost three years from 1845 until 1848 it had only a little success even compared to the Miners' Association. The highest membership figure among these miners was only 500 and these were confined to the Holytown district. In spite of the efforts of John Jacobs and of Cloughan and in spite of the financial help given to the strikers in 1847 the association did not succeed in taking over the structure of organisation which had been built up during the first half of the decade and which appears to have met the miners needs for combination and agitation.

The Revival of Local Union Activity 1849-55

Although organisation in the region was dormant it was not dead and occasional delegate meetings were still being held, such as the one at Black Quarry Glasgow in February 1849 at which the men agreed to give their support to a new newspaper the North British Express and to use it as their organ for communicating information and opinions.[86] For some miners this low level of activity was unsatisfactory and Duncan Robertson of Ayrshire who had been a leading Chartist miner gave expression to this view in an appeal 'to the Coal and Ironstone Miners of Lanarkshire' in March 1849.[87] He argued that in the previous eighteen months with no active union the miners had become aware of more grievances and of the need for combined action. It was his opinion that the impetus must first come from Lanarkshire. 'Up then brethren of Glasgow and Holytown it is you that must first lead the van in this good work. Ayrshire looks to you.'

It was not until early 1850 however that union agitation became

noticeably more vigorous. Weekly delegate meetings were being held in several districts notably Holytown and Hurlford and at the regular Lanarkshire county delegate meetings the need was expressed for a stronger union as iron prices were rising but not wages.[88] The traditional view was persisting that unions should be constructed to meet short term needs. But this revival of organisation remained local to the West of Scotland and when Martin Jude called a conference of all British miners at Wigan in May no Scots were present although the Ayrshire and Lanarkshire men had been specifically invited.[89]

Another possible reason for their non-representation at the Wigan conference was the fact that from April until July there was an extensive strike among the miners of Lanarkshire and Ayrshire, caused first by the refusal of ironmasters to grant a wage rise. Once again it took a strike to generate new life in the union organisation. There were frequent local mass meetings of strikers as well as regular delegate meetings at which men from Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Stirlingshire met to formulate concerted policy.[90] On this occasion the Chartists showed a renewed interest in miners' affairs. One of the early mass meetings of Lanarkshire strikers in the City Hall Glasgow in May was chaired by Duncan Sherrington a prominent Scottish Chartist and even Fergus O'Connor turned up to address miners in strike areas in June.[91] But although Tremenheere believed that the strike was stirred up and supported by English agitators[92] there was little or no attempt by the local union to organise financial or other material support for the strikers.

By July the strike was abandoned and the miners accepted the wages offered by the employers and returned to work. Once again the miners resumed a policy of passivity for several months of 1850-1 during which time iron prices remained consistently low[93] and working conditions and wages were bitterly criticised. Septimus Davis, for example, the veteran of the Miners' Association living in Airdrie in 1851 expressed

the view that conditions in Lanarkshire were the worst in the United Kingdom.[94]

It was not until September 1851 that organised agitation was resumed and on this occasion Glasgow district gave the lead. A general meeting of Glasgow miners was called at Dalmarnock Bridge on the Clyde to compare and discuss wage rates.[95] The chairman commented that it had been a long time since they had last met and that the miners' condition was deplorable. This was confirmed when the wage rates at different collieries were reported. The average wage was about 2s 3d per day, an exceptionally low rate and much lower than it had been during most of the forties. 'An old veteran of the cause then proposed that delegate meetings be held weekly for the purpose of bringing about a feeling of fraternity among the miners'. This was carried unanimously and these meetings took place during subsequent months with the business efficiently administered by the district secretary John Muir.[96] But apart from appeals to employers about wages and talk of a petition to Parliament for an eight-hour day there was no further agitation in spite of the very low level of wages. This was because pig iron did not begin to rise significantly until summer 1852 and in August another general meeting of Glasgow miners was held again at Dalmarnock Bridge with John Hunter as chairman and Muir as secretary.[97] It was agreed that Muir should write to the miners of other Lanarkshire districts to arrange a delegate meeting for the county to plan concerted agitation for a wage increase. This was done and it set in motion regular county delegate meetings held at different centres chaired by different delegates but with Muir as secretary [98]

These meetings helped to stimulate renewed organisation and activity in some districts such as Holytown and Dalry where meetings were held and wage agitation organised.[99] It was the local committee in Holytown who took the initiative to call a Scottish miners delegate conference to be

held in January 1853.[100] The Holytown district had found a new and hard working secretary, Alexander Cherry, who was instrumental in revitalising local organisation and in making Holytown once more the most active mining district.

This was all part of a revival of trade unionism in the West of Scotland mining industry, a fact which again alarmed Seymour Tremenheere. He expressed dismay that, despite attempts to spread education, combinations were persisting in mining districts.[101] During the last three months of 1852 iron prices were rising rapidly.[102] and numerous mineowners were giving wage increases. In many cases however these increases were only given in response to requests or demands by miners' representatives[103] and agitation was therefore seen by the miners to be succeeding.

At the beginning of 1853 John Muir issued an appeal 'to the Miners of Scotland' urging the organisation of stronger trade union activity and naming specific individuals as potential leaders of certain districts. 'To Thomas Hailstones of Airdrie I would say come away with your sons of the Emerald Isle; and to Cherry of Holytown, arouse you with your brave men and true. Let Baillieston be marshalled under . . . the indefatigable James Anderson.'[104] Muir was not to be disappointed because 1853 saw further expansion of union organisation. Regular Scottish delegate meetings were resumed in January 1853. County delegate meetings in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire continued to take place as well as district delegate meetings. There were also frequent general or aggregate meetings organised at district level in Glasgow and Maryhill and at county level in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. A new generation of leaders assumed prominence at these meetings. In addition to Cherry and Muir there was George Cowie of Airdrie, John Hunter of Glasgow, Alexander Rigg of Kilmarnock, James Robertson of Newton near Cambuslang and James Love of Wishaw.[105]

The main concern of this resurrected union organisation was wages but at the meetings there was discussion about the redress of other grievances

such as truck, ventilation and the weighing systems. The creation of a stronger union organisation was a matter of constant interest and concern and rules for a Scottish miners union were discussed at a delegate conference in February.[106] The Glasgow district leaders entered into correspondence with miners in Johnstone (Renfrewshire) in order to encourage combination there. At an aggregate meeting of Lanarkshire miners held at Legbrannock near Holytown in September there was general agreement about the need for stronger union among the county districts of Glasgow, Baillieston, Coatbridge, Airdrie, Holytown and Wishaw.[107] The new districts Baillieston and Wishaw had now taken their places as being comparable to the older centres of the industry. James Anderson of Baillieston was appointed interim secretary for the miners of Lanarkshire.

John Muir in another address to the Coal and Ironstone Miners of Scotland in January 1854 declared himself well satisfied with the progress of union in 1853. Wage increases had been secured without strikes. But now he urged the miners to agitate about truck and pit ventilation.[108] But these were not issues which were capable of exciting large numbers of miners and 1854 turned out to be a quiet year. A revived union organisation was set up in Airdrie in June with the help of Thomas Hailstones[109] but apart from that there was little of the vigour that had been shown throughout the Clyde Valley during the previous year when wages were rising and agitation was spreading.

During most of 1854 pig iron prices remained as high as they had been in 1853 but towards the end of the year they began to drop and so did wages. These wage cuts stirred the miners into action once more in 1855. Angry meetings in Airdrie, Rutherglen, Holytown, Hurlford and Baillieston expressed strong opposition and by April there was a strike of colliers in Kilmarnock who refused to accept a cut from five shillings to four shillings per day.[110] The strike was a short one and it failed to prevent the cut. Elsewhere in the West of Scotland wages were

reduced in spite of the angry meetings but by August as iron prices began to rise the Lanarkshire miners began to press for an increase of one shilling per day. When the employers refused there was a widespread strike in Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown and Wishaw which lasted for over two weeks in September. By the end of the month most employers had granted the increase.[111]

In the jubilant but determined aftermath of this strike the Holytown committee yet again took the initiative in strengthening trade unionism in the region when they and their new secretary Alexander McDonald began the organisation of a new union of Scottish miners.

Conclusions

In describing in narrative form an historical development there is always a temptation to look for and to emphasise significant events or turning points. But what is more illuminating in this story is the continuity of certain features of the miners' unions. Of primary importance was the organisational structure at district and county levels in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. This had gradually evolved before 1842 but assumed a new durability in the strike of that year and in the events of subsequent years. The structure went into decline several times before 1855 but it was always the same structure which was revived when the occasion demanded. Often the same men were involved in each new revival, men like Cloughan, Muir and Hailstones. The importance of courageous and efficient leaders was another constant feature of the story.

The policies of the miners and their leaders were also quite consistent during these years. There was acceptance that pig iron prices could control wage levels and that restricted output was the most effective method of mitigating the worst effects of this. There was a professed reluctance to strike but yet major strikes took place in 1842, 1844, 1847 1850 and 1855. These strikes were occasions when combination among the miners was at its strongest and they were interspersed with periods when

there appeared to be little need to combine except for agitation for higher wages as in 1853.

Holytown and Glasgow were the two most consistently organised districts in the region partly because of their leaders who regularly put up new ideas for stronger organisation and policies.

Into this picture of consistent if fluctuating activity and organisation there crept new developments, breaking the continuity. For the first time in 1843 the Clyde Valley miners established a British connection through the Miners' Association. This lasted for two years and was only continued in a limited way through the National Association after 1845. The British connection was not one for which the miners felt a great need but the Scottish connection, another new development in 1842, lasted on-and-off throughout the period in the form of delegate meetings.

The other factor causing change was the growth of the industry and of the mining population which previous chapters have described. New districts such as Baillieston, Wishaw and Johnstone had to be drawn into the union organisation and thousands of new workers had to be persuaded to combine with their longer-established colleagues. Given the rate of growth of workforce shown in Table 14,the recurring activity of trade unionism and the continuity and resilience of its organisation can only bear witness to its strength among the miners.

Chapter Five - Notes

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Chapter Six

Narrative Account of Trade Unionism II 1855-74

The pattern of district union organisations operating sometimes within a broad national structure and sometimes at a more local level which had emerged before 1855 continued after that year and it is the purpose of this chapter to describe and examine the ups and downs of the union and the new forms of organisation and activity which various leaders attempted to impose upon it up to 1874. The first phase, 1855-63, was the period when Alexander McDonald tried to combine the district unions within a formally organised Scottish organisation. After 1863 he sought to work within a wider British framework with the Miners' National Association. By 1873, however, the best organised unions were once again those at district level which were adopting their own codes of rules.

Alexander McDonald's Scottish Miners' Union 1855-63

When it was announced that delegates from Wishaw, Holytown, Cleland, Airdrie, Coatbridge, Baillieston, Maryhill and Glasgow districts had agreed to the formation of a Scottish miners' union with a new set of rules'it seemed that the course of trade unionism among the miners was about to change. Scottish labour historians have emphasised the importance of this new union particularly for the emergence of Alexander McDonald as a new leader of the miners.[2] Its formation was certainly followed by several new initiatives such as the sending of deputations to recruit members in unorganised districts and the organisation of funds for specific purposes like industrial agitation.[3] With its rules and its appointment of McDonald as secretary for all the Scottish miners the union displayed an efficiency and unity which previous combinations had lacked.

But this was all conducted in accordance with traditions which had been established in previous years. The district organisations remained

active and powerful through their committees and aggregate meetings. The districts combined into larger groups at county level in the case of Ayrshire where regular county delegate meetings were held.[4] In Lanarkshire the larger groups were usually of neighbouring districts rather than of the whole county where the industry was continuing to expand and new districts were being formed. Hence by 1861 Glasgow, Maryhill and Baillieston districts were sending representatives to joint meetings[5] and by 1863 Wishaw, Larkhall and Hamilton had a similar arrangement.[6] These inter-district meetings served the same purpose as the Lanarkshire county delegate meetings which had been a feature of union organisations in the forties and fifties, namely the purpose of exchanging information and conducting concerted policies of wages agitation or restricted dargs. Although the composition of the groups of districts altered as new districts became organised or as older district organisations lapsed they can be seen as continuing an earlier pattern of combination.

The Scottish superstructure added to this consisted mainly of regular Scottish delegate meetings. But it has already been shown in Chapter Five that there had been such meetings since 1844 if not earlier and there were periods when they had been held very regularly as in 1844-6 and 1852-3.

As well as retaining earlier forms of organisation the new union adhered to the policies and general ideology which had determined miners' actions for the previous fifteen years. The price of iron and coal and the state of the market were still accepted as the main determinants of miners' wages and therefore restricted labour continued to be central to union action. Strikes were at leastas frequent as ever although union leaders professed caution even reluctance about the policy just as Cloughan had done in the forties.

In the same way as the union in its organisation and policies combined new elements with traditional so its leadership consisted of new men

working with some more experienced leaders. John Muir of Rutherglen for example who had been a prominent speaker at miners' meetings since 1843 and an indefatigable organiser in the Glasgow district in the early fifties remained in the forefront throughout the sixties. Alex Cherry of Holytown was another of the earlier leaders who retained his prominence in the new union. James Blee of Glasgow on the other hand emerged as one of the newer men in 1856[7] and was to remain a leader during the rest of the fifties and sixties.

But it was Alexander McDonald who was to become by far the most capable and influential leader of the new union. In 1855 he was thirty four years old and an experienced miner who had worked to get himself a university education and had become a teacher.[8] He had many of the qualities required to be a successful union leader, exceptional diligence, intelligence, dedication, confidence and perseverence. But he also had disadvantages and flaws of character. On occasions he was irritable and tactless and as a result made numerous enemies, both inside and outside the trade union movement. Nor was his health very sound. He suffered from epileptic fits and after one of these in July 1866 which struck him when he was going over evidence at the Select Committee on Mines there were fears that he might not recover.[9] He had of course set himself a very exacting task, to organise and lead the Scottish miners in a permanent well-ordered trade union. What made his task particularly difficult was the way in which miners' support for trade unionism ebbed and flowed according to economic circumstances, as it had done in the forties and earlier. This ebb and flow did not halt with the formation of the Scottish union of miners in 1855 as the course of events was to show.

After the initial processes of forming the union, establishing regular meetings and appointing officials were complete the union turned its attention early in 1856 to the current grievances which were affecting Scottish miners. The two main ones were colliery rules which restricted

miners' freedom at work and the constant complaint of unjust weighing of miners' output. The policy which was agreed upon to gain redress of these grievances was to draw up a petition and to send a deputation to Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary .[10] McDonald was part of the deputation and he returned from Westminster full of optimism and enthusiasm about the reception which they had been given by Members of Parliament. He wrote to the Scottish miners -

> 'From the little experience I have now had of the lobby of the House of Commons I believe that there is not a wrong that you now labour under that would not be redressed if you were now united to one another.'[11]

But a wage cut was looming in the West of Scotland in March 1856 and no amount of parliamentary lobbying could avert that. The union leaders first proposed what were seen as more peaceful methods of opposing it. James Blee proposed a four-day week to restrict output and he also proposed arbitration in the event of a dispute.[12] The miners, however, chose strike action and as the vast turn-out began throughout the West of Scotland near the end of March McDonald proposed a sliding scale of wages in relation to coal and iron prices. This ill-timed attempt to avoid a strike did not succeed but the idea was one to which McDonald and others were to return in later years.

Although the union leaders had sought to prevent it, they gave strong support to the strike when it was under way. Indeed the union provided a stronger, more efficient organisation for the strike than any previous turn-out of that scale had had. Throughout the dispute there were regular delegate meetings in Glasgow at which most of the important strategic decisions were taken.[13] McDonald helped to co-ordinate the strike organisation by travelling from district to district speaking to strikers and giving them advice.[14] Although there were several cases of intimidation and violence by the miners[15] in general the strike was

both peaceful and orderly[16] in accordance with the wishes of McDonald and the other union leaders.

But the contest ended in defeat for the miners and they were obliged to accept the wage reduction and return to work. This defeat produced greater determination in some district unions and at McDonald's suggestion a strike fund was set up for future occasions.[17] There was an immediate campaign to consolidate and extend union support in Ayrshire and in August and September 1856 McDonald accompanied by Alexander Riggs of Kilmarnock toured the principal mining districts including those where until then the union had made little or no progress such as Dalmellington, Muirkirk and Lugar.[18] But although there was a new strength of support in Ayrshire organisation became slack in Lanarkshire after the strike, particularly in Coatbridge, Glasgow and Baillieston.[19] It was not until September 1857 that the Glasgow district was revived with a new set of local rules which were intended to complement those of the Scottish union.[20] This gave the district a new lease of life but also a separate identity which was to prove divisive within the larger union.

Gradually during 1858-9 organisation and activity revived elsewhere in Lanarkshire. Union funds began building up again in Airdrie in December 1857 and local leaders were appointed[21] although by 1859 the membership there was just over two hundred[22], rather low for such an extensive mining district. Regular meetings and effective local organisation also emerged in Wishaw, Maryhill and Larkhall during 1858.[23]

During the difficult two years after the 1856 strike McDonald helped to hold the union together to improve its organisation to direct its activities and to bring about its revival in 1858. He travelled around the West of Scotland addressing groups of miners urging them to support the Union. He also set up new funds, the Petition and Agitation fund and a Death and Accident fund.[24] He urged agitation in the form of petitions on three principal issues, fair weighing, ventilation and shorter hours.

He led a deputation to put their grievances before the Lord Advocate in January 1859[25] and in June he took a petition for shorter hours to Parliament.[26]

At the Scottish delegate meetings McDonald gave his reports and made his proposals about policy and organisation. In January 1860 he came to one of these meetings with a new set of rules whereby the union would provide friendly society benefits to its members.[27] With the setting up of the Death and Accident fund two years earlier and now the formulation of these rules the union was taking a new direction and was trying to emulate the example of the new model unions of skilled workers like the A.S.E. McDonald on several occasions made it clear that in his opinion the miners should copy unions like these[28] and it was this same aspiration to more prestigious union status which influenced his decision to attach the Scottish miners to Glasgow Trades Council in February 1859. Dr. Fraser has argued that behind the decision there also lay a belief in trade union solidarity.

> 'It was a sign of McDonald's enlightenment that he saw the value of identifying the miners' unions with other trade unions in an area. Few trades councils managed to get the support of miners' unions.'[29]

In spite of McDonald's views, however, the miners were not very assiduous members of the Trades Council and their delegates rarely attended council meetings. In May 1859 McDonald sent an apologetic letter giving the reasons for the absence of their delegates 'but trusting that they would soon be in a position to attend regular'.[30] This hope came to nothing and they finally dropped out altogether in the mid-sixties.[31]

The organisational changes were temporarily halted however, and union energies diverted by another major strike early in 1860. It began with a strike of Dixon's miners at Govan, Bishopbriggs and Carfin in January but quickly spread when other ironmasters in Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Ayrshire locked out their miners and stopped production in support of

Dixons. Although the Dixon strikers were not union members McDonald and the union gave them full support and undertook the organisation of the strike. They formed a strike committee which co-ordinated the campaign and communicated with district meetings and regional delegate meetings.[32] They sustained the strikers by means of a strike fund built up from contributions from most mining districts in the West of Scotland.[33] Finally they succeeded in conducting the whole dispute in a peaceful law-abiding fashion despite the fact that the Home Secretary had authorised the movement of troops into the strike areas in February.[34]

But in spite of all the organisation and effort involved the strike was a failure and when it was over, as was so often the case, support for the union lapsed in several districts. McDonald, however, worked on, organising yet another petition to Members of Parliament about weighing and ventilation.[35] The strongest support came from the Ayrshire districts where organisation was more vigorous than elsewhere during 1860.

The passing of a new Mines Act in 1860[36] gave a renewed impetus to union activity as there were now further causes and opportunities for agitation. The act led several mineowners to produce colliery rules which were quite unacceptable to the miners. Typical of these were the rules of Robert Bell for his colliery at Wishaw which stated in rule 5 that no miner could bring a claim against the employer for injury sustained in the mine, his safety being his own responsibility. Rule 13 prohibited all meetings of miners in or near the colliery to regulate wages or conditions. Anyone calling or attending such a meeting was liable to dismissal and loss of wages.[37] These restrictions only served to revive union activity, in areas like Wishaw and 1861 proved to be a year of renewed agitation throughout the Clyde Valley.

The Mines Act of 1860 also granted some of the demands which McDonald and the miners had been making during the previous years, in particular a fair weighing system and more rigorous mines inspection. This gave rise

to more pressure by the union and in February 1861 McDonald led a deputation of Lanarkshire miners to Sir Archibald Alison complaining about inaccurate weighing machines, inadequate ventilation and other breaches of the 1860 Act.[38] The Act also gave miners more opportunity to take legal action against their employers for unfair deductions and loss of earnings and the unions' Law Protection Fund was increased and used to finance a new and strenuous policy of litigation in 1861. In September of that year McDonald gave a detailed report to a delegate meeting of the variety of cases settled by means of the Law Protection Fund. He listed seventeen cases which had been won by the miners, fifteen of which were in West Central Scotland. There were four in which the employers had been successful and two which were still pending.[39]

The success of the policy of litigation helped to generate support for the union and district organisations took on yet another new lease of life. The miners became particularly active in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Kilmarnock, Larkhall and Wishaw with regular meetings, delegates being sent to the Scottish delegate meetings and subscriptions collected for the Law Protection Fund, and for miners of Titwood Colliery Pollokshaws who were on strike in the summer of 1861.[40]

But the issue which could always be relied upon to stimulate combination was wages and in the second half of 1861 as pig iron prices began to rise wages agitation began to mount. The restricted darg was being widely adopted by miners in Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire by June of 1861[41] and wage demands were submitted in several Ayrshire districts in November.[42] More demands were made in Lanarkshire early in 1862 and in Wishaw the result was a strike in some collieries and a lock-out in others.[43] All the agitation had the full support of McDonald who urged the miners to press their demands at times of rising iron prices just as he advised them to accept cuts at times when prices fell.

The union revival which had begun in 1861 increased in 1862 with

organisation spreading from Glasgow to Jordanhill, from Kilmarnock out to Hurlford and to Dalry and in Lanarkshire to Hamilton, Quarter and Holytown.[44] Even in Airdrie which the union leaders had regarded as a notoriously submissive and disorganised district a new union was set up in October, several weeks after a meeting organised and addressed by a union deputation including McDonald.[45]

Wishaw set an example of a particularly well organised district at that time with regular meetings and vigorous and successful wages agitation. A district death and accident fund was set up in July. A special collection for McDonald raised the handsome sum of £32 which was presented to him at an open air meeting of miners in Wishaw public park in August.[46] It was a mark of their very thorough organisation that they were able to insist that all miners entering Wishaw become union members and pay into their death and accident fund.[47] For this policy to be feasible there had to be a particularly vigilant and determined union organisation at every pit to make sure that every new man was or became a member.

The vitality of the Wishaw union was inspired partly by the district leaders. Two of the most prominent were George Anderson and Robert Steele, the former an experienced union official from Holytown and the latter a man whose qualities of leadership and organisation were to keep him in a prominent position in the union for several years to come. In addition to setting up and conducting local activity these men also exercised great influence at the Scottish delegate meetings where Steele was sometimes chosen as chairman.[48]

As the union gathered strength in the West of Scotland McDonald came forward with yet another set of rules in October 1862 with which he tried to combine the industrial objectives with friendly society benefits moving ever nearer to the 'new model' type of union.[49] At a rally of miners and their families held in City Hall, Glasgow at the end of October McDonald listed with pride the improvements which had come about

in the condition of the miners giving particular emphasis to the reduction of violence in their industrial relations and the increased education which their children could receive.[50]

At the end of 1862 wages were increasing and McDonald was urging further agitation in Holytown, Wishaw and Kilmarnock.[51] The union had reached a position of greater strength at least in terms of membership, district organisations and funds than ever before. At a Scottish delegate meeting held in Glasgow on 15 December 1862 a complete statement of all district organisations their membership and their funds was drawn up. Table 19 summarises that information for West Central Scotland. Two other districts, Irvine and Kilwinning had also submitted information about their membership but for some reason this was not included in the reports of the meeting.

The strongest districts according to the table were Kilmarnock (with neighbouring villages Hurlford and Galston), Glasgow and Wishaw. Although the first had higher membership Glasgow and Wishaw were considerably wealthier. The Glasgow delegates explained that each of the thirteen pits in their district held its own money amounting to between £20 and £40 in each case. If this was accurate then a total of at least £260 had been accumulated in the district.

But one of the most significant facts about Table 19 is the absence of any reference to the vast districts of Airdrie, Coatbridge and Dalry which had been the principal centres of organisation in 1842. The flickers of activity that had appeared earlier in 1862 in Airdrie and Coatbridge had come to nothing and in the case of Dalry the organised pits were only in neighbouring towns like Dreghorn, Kilwinning and Irvine. A variety of possible reasons for the decline of certain areas has been suggested particularly the suppressive influence of ironmasters, the predominance of a submissive immigrant labour force and the lack of effective leaders[52] but the only one of these problems which affected

all three districts was the lack of leaders.

It is also noticeable but less surprising that there is no mention of organisations at Dalmellington, Ayr, Cumnock or Shotts all communities which in different ways were distant or isolated from the main centres of union activity.

The total membership with the unknown figures for Irvine and Kilwinning added would be around 6,000, many more than had ever been recorded in the region before. And yet it was only a small proportion of the total number of miners in the region which Table 14 showed to be 38,256 in 1861. It was also much less than the numbers involved in the great strikes of the period such as the one in 1856 when over 15,000 were out. Large scale strikes like that have been shown to be periods of feverish union activity with widespread support among the miners, but at times of industrial peace the spirit of combination tended to melt away. Hence the figure of 6,000 for 1862 represented a substantial achievement for the union since no major dispute was in the offing.

In spite of the achievements, the growth and organisation of 1862 in 1863 there began yet another period of decline. This was partly the result of unsuccessful wages agitation but it also came about because of a disagreement between McDonald and the powerful leaders of the Glasgow district.

An event of central significance in this story was a strike of almost 500 miners at Thankerton, Legbrannock and Cleland collieries in Holytown district and belonging to the Monkland Iron and Steel Company. This was part of the wages agitation which McDonald encouraged througout the region in the last three months of 1862 and which in the case of the miners of the Monkland Iron and Steel company had previously produced a wage increase of sixpence per day in October.[53] But when the collieries manager, William Ferrie, reported in December that the miners were on strike for another increase the committee of company creditors instructed him to

agree to their demand only if there was no alternative.[54] Ferrie succeeded, however, in securing supplies of cheap coal from neighbouring coalmasters so that the company could hold out against the strikers with little loss.[55]

The strike dragged on and local district funds could not sustain the strikers so McDonald and the union raised a fund from neighbouring districts. Although the total had reached £74 by February McDonald was not satisfied that all districts had contributed as they might. At a delegate conference in January he was particularly critical of the Glasgow district angering John Muir who accused McDonald of persistent, unjustified attacks on Glasgow. He pointed out that the organisation in Holytown was inefficient although that was where McDonald himself lived.[56] This brought into the open the ill-feeling between McDonald and the Glasgow leaders which became more bitter as the year went on and, by splitting the union, accelerated its decline. The delegate from Wishaw took the side of McDonald and accused the Glasgow men of breaking one of the union rules by keeping the control of district money in the hands of local officials. No agreement was reached at the January delegate meeting and at subsequent district meetings there were undignified squabbles between McDonald on the one side and Blee and Muir on the other.[57]

During the following two months union business went on almost as usual with McDonald still travelling around speaking and organising, sometimes in new areas like Kirkintilloch and Kilsyth.[58] Collections for the first quarter of his salary for the year reached £51 by February which was well up to expectations.[59] The district organisations continued to function efficiently especially in Ayrshire, Maryhill, Wishaw, Larkhall and Hamilton.[60]

Early in March, however, most employers cut their miners' wages from 4s 6d per day down to 4s 0d. This led to a flurry of activity in nearly all districts and a series of local strikes which became a lock-out in

Wishaw in March.[61] At this point a meeting of delegates from West of Scotland districts decided to consult their members about continuing their opposition to the cuts. They called a general open-air meeting of all miners on Saturday 21 March at Powburn Toll, Uddingston where the road from Wishaw, Motherwell and Holytown into Glasgow met with the one from Larkhall and Hamilton. About 1,500 men were present at this crucial meeting which was chaired by James King of Baillieston.[62] When a resolution was put forward that the miners should accept the cut to 4s 0d and return to work in order to protect the union it was heavily defeated. This was clear enough and McDonald expressed his satisfaction with the decision. James King was not satisfied, however, and a week later he said that there had been excessive pressure brought to bear against those proposing to return to work. There had been booing, hissing and even physical intimidation and he argued that voting on strikes should be done by secret ballot.[63] In spite of this McDonald continued to urge the miners to hold out against the cut and the matter became another source of dissension. James Blee expressed the opinion nine months later that it was the Powburn Toll meeting which split the union and which caused its decline.[64] If by holding out the miners had succeeded in preventing the wage cut there would not have been these recriminations about the Powburn decision, but that was not to be the case. During April the miners gradually returned to work having been obliged to accept four shillings as their daily wage and in the case of Wishaw having exhausted their resources. The strikes had almost destroyed this district which four months earlier had been one of the strongest in the Clyde Valley.[65]

Although the union was still active in Maryhill, Jordanhill and in parts of Ayrshire in the summer of 1863 combination was at a low ebb. The Glasgow district was split and Wishaw, Larkhall, Hamilton and Baillieston were so disorganised that they did not even send representatives

to the Scottish delegate meetings.[66] McDonald was disappointed and discouraged as criticism of his leadership by Glasgow district was augmented by Larkhall.[67] He also felt aggrieved about his pay which he said was five shillings per day although his daily rail fares were almost ten shillings. It was therefore with some bitterness that he announced his intention in June to attend a conference of miners in Wigan feeling that there was no need for him in Scotland given the state of the miners at that time and that he must go ' where his services were likely to be better appreciated and rewarded'.[68]

During the following months the situation did not change. Scottish delegate meetings continued but with sparse representation, except from Ayrshire and North Glasgow. When a strike of miners in Maryhill began, money was collected in several districts but again John Muir's South Glasgow district were criticised for their failure to respond.[69] It was at this time, in November 1863, that McDonald again travelled south to a miners' conference in Leeds at which a new British union was formed.

Since 1855 McDonald had maintained a semblance of unity among the Scottish miners - particularly among those of the West of Scotland. He did this by constantly travelling about the mining districts advising, exhorting and organising. He retained the traditional forms of organisation and policy which had been developed in the previous decade but he and his associates in the union introduced separate funds for different purposes and the proposed provision of friendly society benefits after 1860. He also continued the traditional policies of restricted darg and strikes when necessary. The organisation of strikes now became more effective with financial support provided by the union. But McDonald's union also implemented policies which were relatively new for Scottish miners such as parliamentary lobbying, petitions and deputations to Government officials all of which were seen to be vindicated by the Mines

Act of 1860. The policy of financing legal action against employers was also new and it too proved to be successful in 1861-2.

But despite these successes the union was weakened and divided by 1863 because of McDonald's disagreement with Blee and Muir, the disputes during and after the Powburn Toll meeting and the failure of wages agitation and strikes in March and April. A comparatively new factor also contributed to the unions' decline: the unity of the mineowners. The support which the Holytown coalmasters gave to the Monkland Iron and Steel Company enabled them to withstand the miners' strike at Thankerton until the men were obliged to return to work. Similarly the coalmasters of Wishaw district resolved in March to oppose the miners' wage claim and strike by effecting a general lock-out of the district and evicting the families of strikers.[70] By April such was the miners' hardship that they could hold out no longer and they returned to work. When employers showed this kind of unity and determination the union was not strong enough to defeat them.

The Miners' National Association 1863-73

Not since the days of the Miners' Association of Great Britain twenty years earlier had the miners of several West of Scotland districts combined with their English and Welsh brethren in a British union. The Miners' National Association of 1863 had an even looser federal structure than its predecessor and its rules stated that the association ' shall consist of as many Districts as may from time to time conform to the following Rules'.[71] For McDonald personally this new venture was to provide a means of influence and advancement. He became president of the association and through it became involved in British trade union and parliamentary affairs at a high level.

But for the miners of the Clyde Valley the formation of the Miners' National Association was initially of limited importance. At its

conference in Leeds in November 1863 there were only three Scottish representatives - McDonald who attended nominally on behalf of Maryhill district, Robert Kilpatrick from Kilmarnock and district and James Simpson from Falkirk.[72] But at subsequent conferences McDonald was to be the only Clyde Valley man present in spite of his efforts to establish the association in the region. Apart from a brief resurgence in 1866 it was not until the early seventies that enthusiasm for a British union caught on in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire and delegates were sent to conferences of the association.

This did not mean that trade unionism was a spent force among the Clyde Valley miners during the rest of the sixties. Far from it. The same forms of local organisation and policy which had emerged during the previous two decades were sustained until the end of our period. One of the strongest district organisations at the end of 1863 was the Hurlford, Galston and Kilmarnock Miners' Union. They had regular local meetings and were even able to enforce membership on newly employed miners,[73] the mark of a thoroughly effective union. The branch had been formed in September 1862 at a time of union expansion in the West of Scotland when district organisations were also operating in Glasgow, Larkhall, Wishaw, Hamilton, Baillieston, Paisley, Johnstone, Maryhill, Jordanhill, Govan and Dreghorn. By the end of 1863, however, most of these had melted away like snow from a dyke. McDonald praised the Hurlford, Galston and Kilmarnock union for its tenacity and its efficiency in sustaining wages and upholding a restricted darg policy.[74]

But elsewhere in the region trade unionism was weak and divided. Blee and Muir continued to criticise McDonald and to blame him for the lack of unity and organisation,[75] while McDonald openly stated that had it not been for the support which he received from some other districts like Jordanhill he would have left Scotland permanently.[76] But during these difficult months most forms of union organisation persisted, albeit

in a depleted form. Although Wishaw's funds had been exhausted and the leadership demoralised meetings were still held in the district.[77] Similarly although there was a schism in the Glasgow district between North and South these branches continued to function and even hold joint meetings.[78] Above all one of the most persistent institutions was the arrangement of Scottish delegate meetings which continued to take place, often with only Hurlford and Maryhill being represented from the West of Scotland.[79]

During the summer of 1864, with an almost seasonal rhythm, interest in trade unionism began to revive among the miners and by August in addition to Kilmarnock, Hurlford and Galston there were active district organisations at Baillieston, Govan, Jordanhill, Balornock, Huntershill, Johnstone, Wishaw and Larkhall.[80] Once again McDonald was touring the districts and exhorting the miners to press for wage increases. Travelling with him and speaking in support were Robert Kilpatrick of Kilmarnock and James King of Baillieston both of whom had shown qualities of leadership and persuasion even although King had had a disagreement with McDonald after the Powburn Toll meeting in March of the previous year. Relations were also patched up between McDonald and John Muir when they shared the platform at a Glasgow district meeting in August 1864. On that occasion they both agreed on the need for the Glasgow district union to be reorganised and for a new campaign of wages agitation.[81]

At the August conference of Scottish delegates with representatives present from eleven Clyde Valley districts McDonald proposed a relatively new policy to alleviate miners' industrial problems, the policy of organised emigration to the U.S.A. He suggested, and the meeting agreed, that there should be local district emigration committees whose work would be centrally co-ordinated by McDonald himself.[82] During the following weeks and months he worked hard at whipping up enthusiasm for the idea of emigration. But when he told a meeting at Kilmarnock that

he might almost consider leaving for the U.S.A. himself and taking his pit clothes with him to get a mining job one of his audience shouted: 'Yer hands would be ower saft.'[83]

Although emigration was widely accepted as a valid policy in the long run, the union revival during those autumn months of 1864 had the more short-term aim to secure a wage increase. Throughout September and October regular meetings were held in Ayrshire, Glasgow and Lanarkshire at which wage demands were agreed upon and funds collected to support strike action if it should prove necessary.[84] From all this activity several benefits accrued to the miners - revitalised district unions, a reconciliation of McDonald with Muir and Blee, a general wage increase in October and an organisation to assist emigration .

The local emigration societies which McDonald had suggested were set up, funds were raised and by April 1865 miners and their families began to leave for U.S.A. from Dalry, Galston, Kilmarnock, Govan, Glasgow, Maryhill, Wishaw and Holytown.[85] In May the local societies were combined in a Scottish Miners' Emigration Society with its own rules and under McDonald's leadership.[86] But once again there was disagreement and criticism from John Muir who wrote to the press arguing that the U.S.A. did not hold such desirable prospects and urging McDonald to send no more Scottish miners.[87]

In spite of Muir's disquiet emigration proved to be the most durable and extensively organised union activity during 1865 for although several districts had displayed considerable vigour and vitality towards the end of 1864 they failed in most cases to sustain it during the following year. There were burts of organised wage agitation in Kilmarnock in May and June,[88] in Govan in August and in Glasgow and Dalry in September[89] and the basic organisation of Scottish delegate meetings and occasional presentations of money to McDonald continued.[90] But it was all relatively low key activity characteristic of one of the union's 'quiet' periods.

McDonald continued, however, with his policy of parliamentary lobbying to bring about industrial improvements by means of legislation. During 1865 he took up the question of reform of the law of Master and Servant and he represented the miners on a Glasgow based committee known as the Master and Workmen's Acts Amendment Executive Committee.[91] He also persisted with his organisation of petitions for improved working conditions for miners. One M.P. whom he made a particular point of lobbying was the Tory Lord Elcho and there was struck up between them a working relationship which was based on mutual respect and upon agreement on certain carefully defined issues. McDonald saw Elcho as a potentially valuable ally whose support he first sought on a petition in 1860.[92] Through Elcho's good offices a Select Committee on Mines was set up in 1865 to investigate some of the grievances which McDonald had brought to his attention.[93] On behalf of the Master and Servant Committee McDonald and John Strachan a Glasgow solicitor, again sought Elcho's help and invited him to address a trade union meeting in Glasgow. While Elcho expressed support for their cause he was reluctant to make this public. He wrote to Strachan

> 'As to my attending meetings, I should like it but I do not think it would be politic to do so. My name had better not appear in anything you and McDonald may do. If it were to appear the McLaren and Bright party and the Odgers who hate me would immediately get up a counter demonstration and the good we anticipate from your move would be neutralized.'[94]

But Elcho did not desert the cause of the Master and Servant Committee and during 1866 he had regular correspondence with McDonald and with other members of the Glasgow committee. His sympathy was particularly valuable as he was chairman of a House of Commons Select Committee on Master and Servant which was set up at the end of 1865 and which took evidence from McDonald in May 1866.[95]

During 1866 the price of pig iron in Glasgow began to climb and so too did the wage levels of the Clyde Valley miners. The year saw a revival of local organisation, widespread restriction of output and strike action. The re-emergence of unions in Airdrie and Coatbridge completed the picture of 1866 as almost an annus mirabilis.

During the first three months of the year new wage demands awakened support for union branches among the miners of Glasgow, Govan, Larkhall, Baillieston, Hamilton, Johnstone, Coatbridge, Holytown, Wishaw, Maryhill, Dreghorn and Kilmarnock.[96] In addition to restricting output most districts agreed to press for an eight-hour day, a policy particularly dear to McDonald's heart having been adopted as policy by the Miners' National Association in 1863 and it remained an aspiration, occasionally realised, for the rest of our period.[97] Although an eight-hour day could be socially beneficial to miners for a variety of reasons it seems clear that it was adopted in 1866 as another method of restricting output and maintaining wages. The policy succeeded and Ferrie of the Monkland Iron and Steel Company was one of several colliery managers who were forced to concede wage increases by April 1866.[98]

As wages rose and restriction and strikes appeared to be succeeding so the presence of the union was felt more widely throughout the West of Scotland. McDonald took this opportunity to introduce a new set of rules for a re-constituted Scottish Miners' Union which he envisaged as moving ever closer to the A.S.E. in organisation and objectives. If McDonald's aim was to be realised union subscriptions would have to be increased and when he proposed that members should pay sixpence per week, some for death and accident purposes and some to finance agitation, he was opposed yet again by James Blee and also by union branches such as Newarthill. Their argument was that as most members already paid into friendly societies they either could not or would not keep up such high union subscriptions.[99] Although the new rules were adopted, the Scottish

miners continued to function as they had done in the past with delegate meetings and McDonald describing himself as their Acting Agent.[100]

But as always the union was only as strong as its district organisations and during 1866 some of these became very strong indeed. Hamilton and Larkhall combined to adopt a new policy of employing a paid agent. They chose Henry Malcolm for the job, an experienced miner and union official from Shotts and a man whose influence on miners' affairs in the region lasted beyond the end of our period.[101] Wishaw also re-emerged as a vigorous well-organised district under the leadership once more of Robert Steele. The district was strong enough to enforce a 'clear line' policy and to introduce its own local rules.[102]

In Ayrshire the most efficient district was still Kilmarnock, Hurlford and Galston [103] but during the year representatives came to delegate meetings from most districts in the county including New Cumnock and Dalmellington.[104] In both Ayrshire and Lanarkshire there were regular county delegate meetings which was nothing new for the former but it was for Lanarkshire. Although groups of neighbouring districts had often held joint meetings there had been very few county meetings since the fifties. When James Blee suggested reviving them the idea was loudly cheered. In spite of the fact that the mining districts were quite widely separated in the county between Glasgow and Lesmahagow they appeared to have some sense of unity.[105]

When a series of widespread strikes against wage cuts broke out throughout the West of Scotland in July and August these districts and county organisations sprang into action with strike meetings and the collection of funds to support strikers.[106] The strikes were generally successful and by September wages were as high as at any time during the year partly because of the union's strength but also because on this occasion the coalmasters failed to combine to oppose the miners.[107]

If the union's strength depended on district organisations they in turn relied upon the efficiency and honesty of individual officials.

During the July strike there occurred one of the few recorded incidents of embezzlement of union funds in the region by an official. Henry Hughes, Treasurer of Baillieston district, was charged at Airdrie Sheriff Court with embezzlement of £4 of union strike fund. He was found guilty and sentenced to thirty days in prison.[108]

Although 1866 was a growth year for trade unionism McDonald played a less prominent role than usual in West of Scotland affairs. This was partly because he was frequently in London giving evidence in May and June to the Select Committee on Mines and to the Select Committee on Master and Servant.[109] His commitments to the Miners National Association also consumed a good deal of his time and energy and it was undoubtedly a source of pleasure and satisfaction to him when representatives came from Lanarkshire and Ayrshire to the Association's conference held in Glasgow in June.[110] But under this pressure of work his health broke down and in July he took an epileptic fit at the Select Committee on Mines.[111] His friend and colleague on the Master and Workmen's Acts Amendment Committee, George Newton, wrote to Lord Elcho in September

> ' . . . there is reason to fear that poor McDonald will never more be able to attend to this matter /Master and Servant reform/ he being in such a state that the slightest excitement might terminate his mortal career.'[112]

He did recover, however, and by October he was attending meetings, at one of which in Hamilton he expressed support for the growing movement for Reform of Parliament. But during the months which followed he took virtually no part in the Reform meetings and demonstrations in the West of Scotland. This was partly because of his recent illness but also because Parliamentary Reform was not a cause to which he attached great importance. He explained his attitude in a letter to Lord Elcho in February 1867

'I am glad to see that the government is taking up the Reform question

> although you know I am not an ardent reformer in the common currency of the day. Give Safety and Education to our poor fellows and I could be without it forever.'[113]

How his members would have reacted to being described in such a condescending way we can only guess. But it is certain that his lukewarm attitude to Reform was not shared by the miners. Henry Malcolm and Robert Steele were among the organisers and speakers at a big demonstration in Hamilton in November 1866. Marching in the procession were the miners' unions of Motherwell and Hamilton as well as the Free Miners of Wishaw and of Larkhall.[114]

By the beginning of 1867 McDonald was fit and working as hard as ever. But after the expansion and achievements of the previous year there was once again some contraction of trade unionism in 1867. The price of pig iron fell and wages were cut leading to resistance by some district unions. At the Lanarkshire delegate meetings which were held each week money was collected to support any pits which went on strike.[115]

Although the Glasgow union was rather weak and disorganised at that time Wishaw was as strong as ever with Robert Steele now acting as agent.[116] When the district became involved in a strike and lock-out during July and August the union's strength was put to the test and money was subscribed by neighbouring districts. This was particularly useful when some Wishaw employers brought a group of Cornish miners to the town to break the strike. The district union explained their case to the Cornishmen and persuaded them to return to Cornwall with their fares paid by the Wishaw miners.[117] By the end of August the strike and lock-out were over with miners' wages restored almost to the level of the beginning of the year due to the strength of the union and to the support given by McDonald and the other districts.

Immediately after the strike the local organisation was consolidated with a clear lines policy in operation and closer connections with

Motherwell, Hamilton and Larkhall.[118] These districts combined to form a union of the Middle Ward of Lanarkshire with rules which specified that it was 'not only to be protective but also to be a sick and benefit society!.[119] But this consolidation did not last for long and by November the organisation was simply ticking over with little activity except meetings and no agreement about restriction or clear lines.[120]

The same pattern of gradual contraction during the year was seen in Ayrshire. In March McDonald and Malcolm had toured the county with Peter Wyper and Thomas Smith both union men from Kilmarnock. As a result restricted output and clear lines were implemented around Kilmarnock.[121] By November the district union was still active but was not being well supported [122] and wages dropped rapidly towards the end of the year.[123]

The general decline throughout the region in both wages and in union support can again be related to the falling price of iron. On the Glasgow market pig iron prices dropped from sixty shillings per ton in 1866 to fifty three shillings in 1867,[124] and although McDonald had supported the Wishaw miners in their efforts to sustain their wage level neither he nor any district branches felt capable of preventing some wage cut during the year.

Throughout these months of 1867 McDonald was still involved in national trade union and political affairs and his friendship with Elcho strengthened. The national issues which he was most concerned with were safety in mines, the law of Master and Servant and the setting up of a Royal Commission on Trade Unions. The first issue was of constant concern to all miners including those of the Clyde Valley but it had come to the forefront after a pit disaster at Barnsley in December 1866. McDonald wrote to Elcho expressing the anger and dismay of British miners and their determination to secure improvements. He received the reply

> 'Pray keep your people quiet. They would be acting very foolishly in doing what you say they think of doing. There is every dis-

position on the part of Government and of Parliament to do what is right and best for them.'[125]

Elcho was not simply wanting peace and quiet for its own sake. At that time he was instrumental in having a Royal Commission established to investigate trade unions and he did not want the miners to prejudice its members' opinions by disruptive actions. McDonald had suggested in the previous year that there should be a Select Committee on Trade Unions and when Elcho wrote to tell him of the Royal Commission[126] he expressed his satisfaction and delight

'I have received the substance of your letter to Secretary Walpole with pleasure and will bring it to the notice of the miners generally of Scotland today. It is the only proper way to settle a vexed question.'[127]

Elcho also had the responsibility for introducing the new Master and Servant Bill in the House of Commons during 1867 and before doing so he used his friendship with McDonald to secure some compromise and agreement between the Glasgow committee(for amendment of the existing law)and the employers' spokesman William Matthews. McDonald persuaded the Glasgow committee to agree to certain concessions and alterations in the wording of the bill which made it acceptable to Matthews. In the opinion of McDonald and the committee the concessions were worth making in order to secure the passage of the bill and once more his alliance with Elcho and his faith in the House of Commons appeared to be justified.[128]

Alexander McDonald was now a figure of some importance around Westminster. His evidence to the Select Committee in 1866 and his influence in the setting up of the Trade Union Commission and in the forming of the Master and Servant Bill had created his reputation aided by the sympathy and sponsorship of Elcho. In April 1868 his reputation climbed even higher when he appeared before the Trade Union Commission and gave extensive evidence based on his mining and trade union experience

in the West of Scotland.[129] Such was his national standing during 1868 that he decided in September to offer himself for election to Parliament for the Kilmarnock Burghs constituency.

But all this national activity diverted McDonald only occasionally from his work with the West of Scotland miners. In the spring of 1868 there began another active phase of trade unionism which lasted for less than a year until the beginning of 1869. This new phase was triggered off by a series of further wage cuts in the early months of 1868 as iron prices continued to fall. Wishaw district was again one of the first to organise resistance with a growing membership, new local rules and a new agent, Thomas Smith of Kilmarnock.[130] Mass meetings of miners from many districts were being held again at Powburn Toll where it was agreed that funds must be accumulated and where McDonald and Blee both suggested strike action if further wage cuts were imposed by the employers.[131]

Although McDonald had given his evidence to the Trade Union Commission only one month previously when he had presented a picture of himself and his union as being restrained and responsible, reluctant to strike and accepting that prices determine wages, he was now urging widespread strike action and even arguing for 'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work'[132] a demand which could imply non-acceptance of the theory that wages must inevitably be determined by prices and market forces. But his economic ideas and his attitude to strike action were flexible and complex as Chapter Eight shows[133] and his general reluctance to strike was not inconsistent with his advocacy of the policy in May 1868 when circumstances seemed to him to be favourable and justified. He explained his apparent change of policy in a letter in July to Lord Elcho who had informed him of criticism made of his actions by William Matthews who was also a member of the Trade Union Commission.

'My Lord,

I have the note of Mr. Matthews to you on the question that has been

for some time agitating the Scotch Miners in which Mr. Matthews expressed surprise at my advising the men to demand an advance on their rate of pays.

Had things been as they were when I was examined before the Commission it would have been 'sheer madness' to have taught it. They have however, been mostly changed. The starvation wages has driven the men from the county to the extent of fully 4,000 of the 40 or 45,000 men. The labour market now shows symptoms of ease and as the men were driven down when there was the fulness they now demand the advance when the better times set in. Mr. Matthews or any other man will not for a moment think that men driven to sheer starvation wages will not take advantage when they see it in their power . . . For the information of Mr. Matthews I may state I have not advised the men once at the wrong time to seek and advance or to resist a reduction.'[134]

In June 1868 McDonald became involved in yet another unseemly squabble, this time with the leaders of Wishaw district. Just as his dispute in 1863 with Glasgow district had been about local control of funds, so it was on this occasion. The Wishaw union were holding most of their members' subscriptions for local purposes and McDonald accused their leaders, Thomas Smith and James McLaughlin, of 'shuffling and dishonesty',[135] just the kind of intemperate language which made him enemies both North and South of the Border. Unlike 1863, however, this disagreement did not drag on and a working relationship between McDonald and Smith was soon resumed.

For over a year Glasgow district union had been at a low ebb but in June and July more regular meetings were held with John Muir still prominent.[136] During these same weeks unions were resuscitated at Coatbridge, Kilmarnock, Govan, Jordanhill, Maryhill, Johnstone, Airdrie and the Middle Ward of Lanarkshire.[137]

McDonald had told the members of the Trade Union Commission in April 1868 that 'the /miners/ unions in Scotland are not of a general character; their interests are one but they are purely local in character'.[138] During these months of activity, however, in addition to district meetings there were county delegate and aggregate meetings. This widespread unity and the threat of a general strike persuaded many employers to grant wage increases in July which in turn gave a new stimulus to union action. A national fund for Scottish miners was set up to finance policies of restricted darg and shorter hours with McDonald as treasurer and Thomas Smith as secretary.[139] In addition to this the sum of £140 was raised from West of Scotland districts to support a strike of Govan colliers.[140]

With the Scotch Reform Bill impending political activity among the miners increased during the summer and autumn of 1868. McDonald joined the audience of several political meetings asking Parliamentary candidates questions about their views on mining conditions and industrial relations. He was a leading speaker at a working men's election meeting in Hamilton which had been arranged to oppose the Liberal candidature of James Merry M.P. partner in the iron company of Merry and Cunninghame. Sharing the platform with McDonald at that meeting were James King and James Blee.[141] Thomas Smith stood as a candidate in a local government election in Wishaw in September but was hopelessly defeated coming eighth out of nine candidates.[142]

But the Clyde Valley miners' greatest political hopes rested with McDonald at the Kilmarnock election. They subscribed to his election fund which was being organised by Alexander Campbell of the Glasgow Sentinel.[143] But when Campbell wrote asking Lord Elcho's support the reply was a rather embarassed refusal. Elcho explained that he had been asked by others (un-named) to try to persuade McDonald to withdraw. This he could not agree to do, but neither could he subscribe to his campaign.[144] The whole venture ended in disappointment, however, when McDonald felt obliged to drop out of the contest partly through lack of money and partly

through embarrassment about the changing attitude of some of his erstwhile supporters in the Reform League.[145]

During the winter months of 1868-9 the district unions settled back to a rather quieter existence but with the basic organisational machinery still functioning. At a Scottish delegate meeting in January 1869 there was some support for a new Scottish Miners' Union with a strong central council and district branches. But nothing came of the idea.[146] As always most of the union's energies were expended in district organisations. But the idea of a national union was still acknowledged as one of the most promising ways ahead for the miners. Thus when a newly constituted union was formed in Wishaw under Thomas Smith with over 300 members it was agreed that they must now aim to form part of a Scottish union as the members felt local unions could only have limited success and would retard the miners' progress.[147]

A series of leadership problems weakened the union during the course of 1869. In Hamilton a vigorous local official was Andrew McCowie who was justiceman at a local colliery. But when the owners, Hamilton, McCulloch and Co. refused to have him at their pit a legal dispute followed which ended with McCowie's removal.[148] James Blee was imprisoned for attempted bribery in the Hamilton election when he was organising opposition to James Merry.[149] McDonald and Muir had yet another public quarrel when Muir wrote in the North British Daily Mail that the miners had no more confidence in McDonald.[150] Although Thomas Smith leapt to McDonald's support and McDonald himself made some savage public remarks about Muir's background, when he left for a second visit to USA at the end of July the agent of the Scottish miners must have been once more disappointed and disillusioned with his followers.[151]

Thomas Smith's leadership of the Wishaw union also ran into difficulties during the year. He constantly criticised the miners of his district for their lack of unity especially over restriction and short hours and in

November he announced that he was leaving to return to his home town of Kilmarnock.[152] Although he was persuaded to stay he became involved in a disagreement with John Dunn the Motherwell branch secretary and in April 1870 he finally left.[153]

During these quieter months some district unions continued to operate in a limited way, districts such as Motherwell, Hamilton and Rutherglen. Lanarkshire delegate meetings were held from time to time but there was very little life in the Ayrshire districts or elsewhere.[154] When McDonald tried to encourage wage demands and short hours in May 1870 he had to ask the unions of the Middle Ward of Lanarkshire to send deputations of members to help to re-establish unions in Kilsyth, Johnstone, Dalry and Kilbirnie.[155] Conditions were said to be particularly bad in Ayrshire where the men were working long hours and blackleg labour was being used to defeat any attempts at strike action.[156] By August, however, the miners of Kilmarnock district with Thomas Smith back in their midst began to rally to the support of the union with money for a strike fund and agreement on restricted output. By the end of the month wage increases were granted in the district.[157]

At the same time union support was growing and organisation improving in Maryhill, Hamilton, Larkhall, Motherwell and Airdrie, but not in Wishaw which had not recovered from Smith's departure.[158] But when wage increases were granted these organisations slipped back to the passive state which they had been in before the summer period of wage agitation.

This passivity continued during most of 1871. There were bursts of fitful activity in Maryhill, Motherwell, Hamilton and Kilmarnock during the course of the year,[159] but the majority of miners felt little need to be involved in agitation. Pig iron prices were climbing rapidly and wages were stable and quite high as Figure 5 shows. The apathy was predictably galling for McDonald who selected the Wishaw miners for particular vituperation. He referred to them in a speech as 'grovelling

dogs' because of their lack of unity, their submissiveness and their earlier treatment of Thomas Smith.[160] When he gave evidence to the Truck Commission in 1871 McDonald had to confess that the Miners National Association had no branches in Scotland at all at that time. He went on ' there are associations in Fife and Midlothian and in Lanarkshire but these are local associations acting on their own account'.[161]

The Revival of District Unions 1872-4

Figure 5 shows that although iron prices were soaring in 1871 miners' wages remained constant. Although a stable wage level of five shillings per day was desirable and an improvement on miners' experience of previous years in 1872 locally organised wage agitation began so that the miners might reap some of the benefits of the boom in iron and coal. This produced a widespread revival of district unions which were stronger and better organised than at any time before. But with the drop in prices in 1873-4, the onset of the 'Great Depression' and the defeat of the massive 1874 strike the revival came to an end.

The first districts to begin concerted action for wage increases in the spring of 1872 were Kilmarnock, Glasgow, Larkhall, Motherwell and Maryhill, the last of which had accumulated a fund of £308 by May.[162] During the summer and autumn months their example was followed by Carluke, Hamilton, Baillieston, and the new mining district of High Blantyre.[163] Even the Wishaw miners once more under Robert Steele's leadership and those of Holytown led by Henry Malcolm again formed themselves in to unions, as did the usually disunited men of Airdrie and of Dalry.[164] Their solidarity produced spectacular results and wages had doubled by the end of the year. Further support for trade unionism followed this success and the machinery of Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Scottish delegate meetings assumed a renewed vitality.[165] Policies of restricted output were agreed among Lanarkshire districts. Through the Scottish delegate

meetings the sum of £620 was raised as a presentation to McDonald, the biggest he ever received during our period.

Some indication of union membership at this time is given in Table 20 which cites figures from seven district unions. These were unions where membership happened to be quoted in newspaper reports of meetings or which in 1873 affiliated themselves to the Miners' National Association. The table shows that throughout 1872-3 there was growing support for most district unions as wages rose and trade unionism revived.

An approximate comparison is possible with the membership figures for 1862 given in Table 19. Not surprisingly they show very substantial increases in Wishaw and Larkhall districts where the industry had expanded throughout the decade covered by the two sets of figures. Although Maryhill was not an organised district in 1862, by combining the figures in Table 19 for Springfield, Huntershill, Balornock, Kenmure and Keppoch, all collieries which were part of Maryhill district, a comparison can be made. Similarly in 1862 the only organised part of Dalry district was Dreghorn and its total is compared with the combined 1873 figures for Dalry and Den which were immediately adjacent. With the exception of the rather sluggish district of Holytown the general impression is of substantial increase in membership by 1872-3, much greater proportionally than the increase in the total number of miners which Table 14 showed to be about twenty per cent between 1861 and 1871. Although the seven districts quoted in Table 20 were probably among the strongest at that time in the region it is not unreasonable to conclude that over most mining districts there was a substantial increase in trade union support between 1862 and 1872-3 and that therefore this period of revival saw organised trade unionism at its strongest since the forties.

Although there was a temporary wage cut during the winter of 1872-3 union morale and solidarity continued to grow throughout most of the Clyde Valley in 1873. At successive local and Scottish delegate meetings

there was agreement on working an eight-hour day and on building up substantial union funds.[166] In addition to the established leaders like Henry Malcolm and Robert Steele in Lanarkshire and Thomas Smith in Ayrshire a new generation of speakers and organisers were emerging like Hector McNeill and William Smith at Larkhall, James Scobbie at Baillieston and James Abercrombie at Carluke all of whom became regular and prominent figures outwith their districts at county and Scottish delegate meetings.

As a result of the Trade Union Act of 1871[167] unions could now register with the Assistant Registrar for Friendly Societies (Scotland) by submitting rules, accounts and annual returns in order to secure greater legal protection. In 1873 the first Clyde Valley miners' unions availed themselves of this right. The Wishaw miners' union was formally constituted in accordance with the requirements of the Act on 8 February 1873.[168] The leading office bearers were John Rennie (President), Robert Steele (Vice President), John Barrowman (Secretary), Alex Aitken (Treasurer) and Michael Brown (Steward) and their office was in Scott's Commercial Hotel, Wishaw.

The Motherwell miners were next to register on 19 April 1873 with a set of rules which were almost identical to those of Wishaw.[169] Their office bearers were Alexander Corns (President), John Logan (Vice President), Hugh McDade (Treasurer) and Robert Muir (Secretary) and their meeting place was Brandon Hotel Hall, Motherwell. The Carluke miners' union followed on 5 May 1873 with rather different rules and naming as office bearers James Boles (President), James Abercrombie (Secretary) Alexander Lindsay (Treasurer) and John Abercrombie (Agent)[170]

By May 1873 three districts, Maryhill, Wishaw and Larkhall had decided to be affiliated to the Miners' National Association and James Bowie of Maryhill, Hector McNeill of Larkhall and Michael Brown of Wishaw attended its half-yearly conference in Glasgow at the end of that month.[171] The Ayrshire districts of Dalry and Den also joined in November 1873

which gave the Association greater strength in the West of Scotland than at any time since its formation.[172]

But these district unions which were registered or were affiliated were not the only ones to be actively functioning. Airdrie district, for example, had been re-established and such was its strength that in November a district strike was organised to protest against the employment of non-unionists.[173] In February of the following year the Airdrie union appointed an agent William Pollock and an eight-hour day and restricted darg were being adhered to throughout the district.[174] In addition to these districts there were active unions functioning in 1873 in Hamilton, Lesmahagow, Shotts, Harthill, Coatbridge, Glasgow and Kilmarnock,[175] all being encouraged and advised by McDonald at delegate meetings and at such local meetings as he was able to attend. He constantly emphasised the need for working short hours and restricting output.

McDonald was now more involved than ever in Parliamentary affairs. In his capacity as President of the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. he was involved in a somewhat unsuccessful campaign of lobbying M.P.'s about the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act and about a new Mines Regulation Bill.[176] He was also addressing miners'meetings on this new bill and organising a petition to the Home Secretary.[177]

During 1872-3 he began to argue in public for arbitration as a means of settling industrial disputes,[178] because at that time he was co-operating with Elcho in an attempt to form an association of employers and employees.[179] In October 1872 Elcho wrote to several Scottish mineowners explaining his aims.

'I am anxious to have an opportunity of meeting a few of the leading Coal and Iron masters representing the different mining districts in Scotland for the purpose of privately talking over with them a project that is being set in foot with the view of lessening the chance of strikes and of bringing about the friendly intercommun-

communication of Capital and Labour.'[180]

The idea made very little progress in Scotland, however, partly because in December 1872 a new society of Scottish mineowners was formed being a federation of local district organisations including Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire.[181] The society was based in Glasgow and it existed to organise mutual support on a variety of matters including industrial relations. The members would agree collectively when to impose wage cuts or to give increases and they would support each other in the event of a strike or a lock-out.

Industrial relations, however, were comparatively peaceful in the many districts during the prosperous months of 1872-3 in spite of the fact that wage increases were in many cases being given only after pressure and demands by the men. McDonald argued that Government legislation at the time was generally advantageous to the miners. At a meeting in Wishaw in December 1872 he referred to the new Mines Regulation Act, the Master and Servant Act and the Trade Union Act of 1871 citing them all as improvements in the miners' lot and giving particular praise to Mr. Gladstone and his Government.[182] In spite of his friendship with Lord Elcho, McDonald felt greater affinity for the Liberal party and it was as a Liberal that he finally secured election to Parliament for the Stafford constituency with the financial help of the miners of the West of Scotland.[183]

But in March 1874 the mineowners began to impose wage cuts as iron and coal prices were falling. The consequences of this have been described by other historians.[184] McDonald argued that some wage cuts should be accepted but the majority of Clyde Valley miners disagreed and between March and June 1874 there were strikes and lock-outs in virtually every mining district. Although the scale of the strike was as vast as any since 1856 it was not effectively co-ordinated or organised and it ended in defeat and disillusionment. The revival of district

unions collapsed once more. Even those which were formally registered proved to be short-lived. The Carluke and Wishaw unions were defunct by the end of 1874[185] although the Motherwell union survived until the end of 1875.[186]

Although McDonald had achieved his aim of entering parliament 1874 was also a bitterly disappointing year for him. He had been opposed and reviled by Clyde Valley miners at the time of the strike and at the conference in May of the Miners' National Association he tried to justify himself and to answer his critics.[187] In October after the death of William Allan of the A.S.E. had received little attention in the press he was particularly depressed and disillusioned. In this mood he confided in his friend in the T.U.C. George Howell.

> 'I quite agree with you the conduct of the papers is vile. It is not them altogether it is the people that is most to blame.
>
> They are more interested in the pedigree of some dog or horse of some blackguard than in the career of a man like Allan. They don't want to know aught of such men.
>
> I go to Stafford on Monday evening to give an account of my services to them. I almost feel inclined to throw the whole thing up and retire forever from all public matters. One moils and toils and may have all his work ignored by some ignoramus.'[188]

His material circumstances were now substantially changed. During the sixties and early seventies he had lived as a lodger in two rented rooms on Main Street, Holytown.[189] But by 1874 he was owner of Wellhall, a substantial mansion house in Hamilton with extensive grounds. As well as being a Member of Parliament he was also a mineowner[190] and his involvement with the miners' unions of the West of Scotland was inevitably curtailed, but by no means terminated. But this curtailment marked the end of an epoch for the miners for whom he had worked for twenty years.

Conclusions

From Chapters Five and Six a picture emerges of trade union activity fluctuating from year to year usually in response to economic circumstances but retaining the same basic machinery, organisation and many policies. The districts were the bases of union strength for organising agitation, raising money, carrying out policies and providing leaders. But no single district organisation remained consistently active and vigorous throughout the period. Glasgow and Kilmarnock were among the most regularly organised along with Wishaw once it had been established as a district in the fifties. But even they had had periods of weakness and disunity including times when trade unionism generally was thriving in the region. Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown and Dalry were all successful centres of union activity during most of the forties and fifties but in the sixties and early seventies their activity was much more sporadic and at times non-existent. But new unions were quite readily formed in districts where mining was being newly established such as Larkhall, Hamilton, Maryhill and High Blantyre. Although the policies of some mineowners may explain these variations it seems more likely that the organisation of a district union depended on the availability of men who were capable and willing to take on the task.

The leaders who emerged tended to have similar views. Men like William Cloughan, John Muir, James Blee, Robert Steele, Thomas Smith, Henry Malcolm, James King and Alexander McDonald all believed in restricting output, striking only when advisable or necessary, peaceful forms of agitation like petitions and deputations and generally in allowing wages to be determined by prices. Their personalities influenced the course of trade unionism, even at times when they disagreed. The feud between McDonald and Muir, for example, was a regular source of division and weakness within the union.

Throughout the period there were several organisational changes.

District unions were newly constituted. British or Scottish federal unions were constructed. New sets of rules were regularly produced which gave new names to what was basically a continuing but fluctuating organisation. The structure of district unions, county delegate meetings and Scottish delegate meetings persisted with only a little variation throughout our period. It is therefore quite justifiable to refer to 'the union' as one continuous institution. From the middle fifties more substantial and varied union funds were raised and more emphasis was put on securing improved working conditions through Parliamentary legislation. The union also sought in the sixties and early seventies to provide friendly society benefits for its members and generally to approximate more closely to the 'new model' style of unions. These intended friendly society benefits were never really provided by the union during this period principally because so many Clyde Valley miners had already subscribed to separate friendly societies. In this respect the trade union experience of these miners was quite different from that of their counterparts in Northern England where the provision of such benefits was a regular and well established function of unions.[191]

But the mobility of miners, their economic insecurity and the tradition of flocking to the union at times of wages agitation and strikes only to abandon it later all made it difficult to maintain a framework of organisation and to carry out long term policies. It may be argued that the policies were wrong especially since they were based upon an acceptance of wages controlled by prices. The attempts at formal organisation will be examined more closely in Chapter Seven and the main policies in Chapters Eight and Nine. But what must be emphasised is the continuity and resilience of trade unionism and its forms of organisation among the Clyde Valley miners during our period. Despite all their economic and social problems they were among the most united and active trade unionists in Scotland.

Chapter Six - Notes

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Chapter Seven

Union Organisation and Administration

The swings and movements of trade unionism among the West of Scotland miners were marked from time to time by the production of new sets of rules and regulations. Although these rules referred to union objectives and policies they dealt principally with organisational and administrative matters. A comparison of the provisions made for such matters as the work of office-bearers, the administration of union finance, the regulation of meetings, the division of power between local and central committees and the control of membership shows both the continuity and the changes in organisation to which reference was made in the previous two chapters. That comparison is the purpose of this chapter.

Union Rules

To provide some earlier historical perspective reference will be made to the rules of the Glasgow and Clydesdale Association of Operative Colliers of 1817 and of the Ayrshire Colliers Association of 1824. But the main emphasis will be on the following fourteen sets of rules from the period 1843-75.

Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland (1843)

Coal and Iron Miners' Association of Scotland (1855)

Glasgow Miners' Union (1857)

Coal and Ironstone Miners' Association of Scotland (1862)

Airdrie Miners' Association (1862)

Coal and Ironstone Miners' Mutual Protection Association of Scotland (1866)

National Association of Miners (1867)

Amalgamated Coal Miners' Mutual Protection Society of Wishaw (1873)

Amalgamated Coal Miners' Mutual Protection Society of Motherwell (1873)

Carluke Miners' Association (1873)

Larkhall Miners' Mutual Protection, Accident and Funeral Association (1874)

Hamilton Miners' Mutual Protection, Accident and Funeral Association (1874)

Stonehouse Miners' Mutual Protection, Accident and Funeral Association (1875)

Maryhill Miners' Labour Protection and Benefit Association (1875)

There were numerous pressures and influences which helped to shape the rules of these unions. Long standing traditions must be seen as the first influence producing, for example, regulations for entry to mining. The organisation and fast rate of growth of the coal mining industry in the area involving great increases in numbers employed in mining reinforced these traditional regulations as well as increasing the number and complexity of local and national unions.

Other unions and societies had their effects on these rules. English miners' unions, for example,played a large part in drawing up the rules of the national associations of the eighteen forties and the sixties. Each of these associations, in turn, affected the formulation of subsequent union rules in the West of Scotland. The Scottish union of 1855 included several items in its rules taken from those of the national association of ten years earlier. The Wishaw, Larkhall and Maryhill rules of the early seventies conformed to some objects of the national association of the sixties to which these three unions were affiliated.

Large craft unions like the Scottish Iron Moulders' Union and the A.S.E. were the envy of several miners' leaders like Alexander McDonald as his speeches showed. Some of the miners' rules reflected this, particularly in the fifties and sixties as subscriptions increased and more attempts were made to provide friendly benefits.

Professor Hobsbawm has shown that the 'clearance ticket' system which

persists in almost all miners' rules of the West of Scotland had been a feature of many craft union organisation since the eighteenth century.[1] The minutes of meetings and the rules of the Scottish Iron Moulders' Union show the system working much more thoroughly than it was even planned to work by Scottish miners.[2] In persisting with the system the miners were perpetuating a tradition common to many branches of British labour.

Friendly societies, too, had their influence on the miners' rules, for example on those of the Airdrie union of 1862 of the Scottish union of 1866 and the seven registered unions of 1873-5 all of which sought to provide benefits comparable to those of friendly societies and, in the case of the Airdrie union,borrowed their rules from established friendly societies.

Alexander McDonald must also be counted as one of the principal influences on these rules. From 1855 onwards he was involved in drawing up several sets of articles for Scottish and British unions, and in some cases, for local unions. A conference of miners' delegates, for example, from Motherwell, Larkhall, Wishaw and Hamilton met in the Royal Hotel Wishaw on 17 October 1867 to frame rules for a combined union and benefit society on the advice of Alexander McDonald.[3] Another influential individual in this respect was the Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies (Scotland). His forms for application for registration tended to shape the rules of the seven registered unions between 1873-5.

The very fact that these unions had rules formulated for their guidance shows some continuity. The members or at least their leaders, felt that the unions should be governed along certain lines, according to certain regulations and following certain previously arranged policies. But the existence of rules and regulations suited the ethos of only a part of the mining population as it was a feature more of the unions of skilled artisans than of unskilled workers. A great deal of the organ-

isation and industrial action of miners in the West of Scotland happened spontaneously at pithead meetings or in public houses, building up into strikes or other campaigns and disappearing like snow from a dyke. Most of the rules discussed here operated for limited periods, affecting limited numbers of miners.

Administrative Power in the Union

Because of the fact that these unions were so varied in their extent and in the circumstances of their formation, their rules varied widely in the amount of detail with which they specified the numbers of office-bearers, their election and functions. There were obviously different requirements between national unions on the one hand and the local county or district areas on the other. But the amount of detail did not increase with the passing of time.

The Ayrshire union of 1824 which was one of the earliest attempts at formally organised combination of Scottish miners had rules which were thorough and meticulous. The association was to be controlled by a committee of management with a preses, a treasurer who was to keep a cash book with details of receipts and expenditure, and a secretary or clerk who held office for an unspecified period, kept a minute book and was to communicate news of colliers' affairs throughout the county. A general committee of delegates from all collieries was to superintend the association and delegates' expenses were to be paid by the members at their pits. Amendments to rules and other motions had to be accepted by at least two thirds of delegates at a meeting before they were passed. This committee of delegates also had the power to levy money from members. Meetings of the committee could be summoned by the preses with at least four days notice being given.[4]

A similar but more extensive and complex structure was set up in 1843 for the Miners' Association. An executive committee of eleven

including a president, vice-president, a general and an assistant secretary, and a treasurer with six others, were to run this union. The duties of the president, secretary and treasurer were outlined. Minutes were to be kept, with membership lists, monthly balance sheets and correspondence files.[5]

Considerable power rested with the national delegate conference held twice a year. Only there could general committees be elected, rules altered or major policy decisions be taken. But arrangements were also made for district organisation with monthly meetings at which each colliery was to have one delegate.[6] Each mine, colliery or district also had the right to elect office bearers for its local affairs and each district secretary was to send the national secretary a fortnightly report and account of finances.[7]

In contrast with this careful series of regulations the rules of the Scottish union of 1855 paid much less attention to the office bearers and their powers at both national and local levels partly because more emphasis was put on the role of the general secretary than had been the case in 1843 but also because it was left to local unions to formulate their own bye-laws with reference to administration.

There was to be only one central office-bearer in 1855, a general secretary who in return for a yearly salary was to communicate with all districts and with the press, attend and take minutes of Congress meetings and keep an account of income and expenditure of a General Purposes Fund.[8] The general secretary also had the responsibility of collecting from district secretaries information about accidents to miners, injuries and bereavements. He was to ascertain that investigations took place into accidents and, if not, he was to approach the Lord Advocate or the Secretary of State.[9]

A considerable burden was being placed on the shoulders of the general secretary, the role which Alexander McDonald was to fill for

many years. His was the responsibility not simply for the general business of the union but also for maintaining its unity and strength of purpose as a national association. If he were to be slack or inefficient then this already slender connection between the various mining districts of Scotland could disappear. Indeed he also had responsibility for success or failure of the union in some districts since he was to communicate with district secretaries. This correspondence would involve encouraging, informing, advising and perhaps even rescuing secretaries of many levels of competence.

The aim, however, was to uphold the power of the districts and of individual pits as there was no all-powerful central committee as had been the case with the union of 1843. District meetings of delegates were to be held each week[10] and these local associations were given considerable discretion in matters of money, entries to mining, clearance and strikes. While these articles gave greater power to local branches of the union they were vague about how these local branches were to be administered. References were made to district meetings, committees and particularly to clerks or secretaries but no such provision was made as in 1843 for the election of these local office-bearers. In subsequent reports of the growth of the union in the Glasgow Sentinel it became clear that district associations could draw up bye-laws for local affairs,[11] something which was also permitted in 1843.

An example of these local bye-laws is provided by the rules of the Glasgow Miners' Union of 1857 which created a committee of three consisting of a president, secretary and treasurer all of whom were to be elected by members for a period of three months. At the end of this period they were to give a report of their stewardship to a general meeting of the members whereupon they could be re-elected for a further period of three months if their report was satisfactory.[12] Compared to the Ayrshire union of 1824 this was a small committee and this provision

together with the extensive responsibility placed upon the general secretary meant that union power was in comparatively few hands in the years following 1855.

The general vagueness of these provisions and the concentration of power on a few officials were somewhat altered in the new regulations for the Scottish miners' union of 1862. The central administration, instead of being in the hands simply of the general secretary, became the responsibility of an executive committee of three paid officials.[13] Each district was to be run by a committee of four, one of whom was to be secretary who would correspond with clerks of pit branches and with the general secretary.[14] These more detailed arrangements increased the weight and the power of the central committee. They laid down more clearly than before how districts were to be organised, indicating more intervention by the general union in local administration.

When the Airdrie Miners Association was formed at the same time a much larger local committee was proposed consisting of eight directors.[15] This extended committee was based upon the example of local friendly societies which the union's founders deliberately set out to emulate. Because they were setting out to provide friendly society benefits more complex finances were involved than was the case with a union which concerned itself simply with industrial relations. Hence the need for a larger committee.

The Miners' National Association which was formed in 1863 and whose rules were finalised in 1867 had a more complex and sophisticated administrative structure than any of its predecessors. Of the thirty general rules twenty one dealt with the association's administration and four with finance. Power in the association was spread between district associations, a national delegate conference, a national executive council, a small committee from the executive council and four office bearers, President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.[16]

The appointment of agents to spread the union and its ideas in various localities was a feature which had been revived from twenty years earlier. The Miners' Association of the eighteen forties had appointed lecturers to perform this task in the manner of Chartist lecturers. No mention was made of these lecturers in that union's rules. The idea of sending 'missionary' agents to districts where no union existed had been tried in the West of Scotland in 1855 and 1856 when McDonald's new Scottish union was being established. Ayrshire collieries were notoriously slow to form unions and several Lanarkshire miners were sent there to exhort them to join the Scottish union.[17] But there again no provision was made for these deputations in the union's rules. The rules of 1867, however, made quite detailed provision for these agents and how they were to work in conjunction with district committees but under the supervision of the National Executive Council.[18] Missionary activity was now formalised as part of the union's function. This was a policy which local district associations would be unlikely to be able, or even want to carry out and which only a nationally organised and co-ordinated federation could do.

Among the other regulations for the administration of the Miners' National Association were those which dealt in some detail with Council meeting places, office-bearers' expenses, delegates' credentials and provision for amendment of rules.[19]

Even district unions were themselves federations as the rules of the seven registered Clyde Valley unions of 1873-5 showed. The management of all these unions was quite similar and in all sets of rules described in some detail. Each union was to be a federation of separate colliery unions but a much tighter, more rigorously constructed federation than the earlier national federations. The union in each case was administered by an executive board consisting of three or four office-bearers whose duties were prescribed in detail and who were elected every three or, in

the case of the Larkhall group, six months, along with delegates from all collieries in the district, usually one from each.[20] Each branch was to have its own office-bearers and was to be in regular correspondence with the executive who had the right to send a number of members to inspect the running of any branch. In these federations the branches were to be subordinate to the central executive.

There was a return here to the larger district committee like that of the Ayrshire Miners of 1824 and like those of friendly societies which were also organised in accordance with the requirements of the Assistant Registrar. As Scottish and district unions in the sixties and seventies attempted to assume the functions of friendly societies as well as trade unions their executive committees were expanded and the intention of the Scottish union of 1855 to place the administrative responsibility on a general secretary and small groups of local activists was abandoned.

But although committee sizes varied as did more detailed provision for minutiae such as amendment of rules or the keeping of minutes one continuous and recurring feature of union administration was the emphasis on the district union and its autonomy. Each of the national unions (British and Scottish) had quite specific regulations which allowed local unions considerable power and discretion in the running of their own affairs.

The Miners' Association of 1843 included in its rules provisions whereby these districts could draw up their own bye-laws which had to be in accordance with the association's general rules.[21] At a delegate conference of Scottish miners held at Falkirk on 31 May 1844 it was agreed that a code of bye-laws for miners in Scotland should be drawn up. Each district was invited to bring forward laws for inclusion and a committee would formulate the code.[22] In view of the experience of the Robert Owen's short-lived Grand National Consolidated Trades Union

nine years earlier, in view of the still rudimentary communications apart from the penny post which existed in Britain in 1843 and in view of the traditions of local rather than national unions among miners as well as other trades, a large measure of local autonomy in the Miners' Association was necessary. The stated objects of the union were shorter working hours and higher wages which were issues for local agitation and negotiation. The implied grand purpose of the leaders of this union was to create a comradely spirit between miners of Scotland and miners of, say,Yorkshire which was to prove capable of only gradual realisation and it was the local sensitivity and separatism of Scottish miners which helped to weaken the Miners' Association after 1845.[23]

Devolution of power to district unions was implicit in the rules of the 1855 Scottish Miners Union because of the vagueness about local organisation in the 1855 rules. Local associations could take any form they wished. It was not the function of these articles to stipulate that form but to create the loose framework within which these different associations could combine their efforts. The framework which was being created was intended to be that of an even looser federation than that of 1843. Although the rules of the Scottish miners unions of 1862 and 1866 included somewhat clearer specification of the nature of district organisations they were not sufficiently prescriptive to indicate a major alteration in the broad federal nature of the union.

At that stage of mining history a loose federal structure was all that a national union, British or Scottish, would provide. This was again made clear in the rules of the Miners' National Association in 1867. From these rules it was clear that, as with the earlier national unions, what was being created was another federation of district unions. The association was to consist of 'as many Districts as may from time to time conform to the following rules'.[24] In its objects this federation was taking on a quite new and distinct role - that of a pressure group

urging legislation about management, protection of lives and health and improvement of 'moral status'.[25] This was a role to which McDonald attached particular importance and he was a frequent visitor to Westminster to lobby Members about miners' affairs. This national federation also had the role of co-ordinating certain activities at district level for example the provision of friendly society benefits. It was to be the responsibility of district associations to raise funds to provide assistance for injured, aged or infirm members. In this they were to be 'encouraged' by the national association.[26] But in this as in other matters of local administration and policy the initiative was left to the district unions.

Although the national unions adhered to this pattern the district unions invariably arrogated to themselves substantial powers and control over colliery branches where such branches existed. The district was the most viable size of unit for union organisation because of the community feeling which was described in Chapter Four and because communications and industrial action could most effectively be carried on within a district such as Holytown, or Wishaw, or Kilmarnock, Galston and Hurlford.

Union Finances and their Control

To be effective the miners' union in its various manifestations required a fund, or in McDonald's time several funds for separate purposes. In addition to general running costs such as postage and travel expenses there were legal expenses, strike aliment and from the sixties onwards friendly society benefits to be paid. Apart from levies raised in support of specific strikes or other special causes the union depended on members' subscriptions as the main source of finance. The subscription had to be based upon what members could afford to pay and upon what they would be willing to pay, as well as upon what the union leaders felt they

required. Table 21 shows how union fees and subscriptions varied from 1824 until 1875. Although the 1824 Ayrshire union had a high entry fee it did not receive weekly subscriptions, a fact which must have weakened it by deterring some miners from joining and also by ruling out a regular income. The national associations of 1843 and 1855, however, had identical entry fees and subscriptions although local unions after 1855 could raise an additional sum from their own subscriptions as the Glasgow union did in 1857.

With the intention to provide friendly society benefits in the sixties subscriptions had to be increased as the table shows. Alexander McDonald believed that in 1866 they should have been even higher to be comparable to those of English miners' unions and of craft unions like the A.S.E.[27] But the advent of registered district unions between 1873 and 1875 produced higher subscriptions than ever on the advice of the Assistant Registrar for Friendly Societies who had to approve their rules and provide legal protection for their finances. By 1873 miners' wages were higher than they had ever been but as they fell again in 1874 the unions died from lack of support.

Just as the subscriptions increased so too did the complexity of financial control within each union. Although the Ayrshire union in 1824 charged only an entry fee it nevertheless committed itself to provide support for colliers' widows. Under these circumstances the treasurer's cash book must have been a cause of constant concern and the ad hoc levies which the rules also allowed must have been quite frequent.

One particularly important feature of the financial regulations of the national unions of 1843 and 1855 was the different way in which each proposed to share money between central and local unions. In 1843 the finances of these local organisations were provided for by a regulation giving each association, mine or colliery the right to keep one half of their weekly contributions - 'to defray their local expenses, such as

the expenses of their delegates and the incidental expenses of their meetings'. The remainder of the contributions was to be sent to the general treasurer.[28]

The emphasis in 1855 upon local control was greater. Whereas in 1843 half of the subscriptions were sent to the national association, in 1855 each pit was to hold its own money. 'save such as may be required to cover the necessary expenses of the General Association'. Each delegate was to take with him as much money as would be required to the weekly district meeting.[29] While these provisions were vague about how much local associations were to contribute to the general funds, and while these amounts might on occasion be as much as the half of local subscriptions stipulated in 1843, nevertheless the tone of the regulations is much more de-centralised than the 1843 equivalent.

Lest these articles of 1855 appear to be setting up a completely voluntary confederation of local, colliery branches, it was also stipulated that any works which refused to submit their required contributions would be expelled from the union as would any member who was further in arrears than two months,[30] sanctions which the 1843 union did not threaten.

Although the Glasgow Miners' Union of 1857 was a branch of the Scottish union its rules contained more detailed provisions for union finance than those of its parent body. Of the 1½d per week which each member paid as a subscription, one penny was to be put in the bank and the other half penny was to be held by the treasurer 'to propogate the principles of union'.[31] Each member was to have a pass book recording his financial contributions. All union money in the bank was to be in the names of six members and only the instructions of these members or of the president could have the money withdrawn.[32]

The Scottish union's finances in 1855 were covered by one article but in 1862 took up four. There was to be a clear demarcation between

money for general purposes and local funds. The general purposes were to be covered by an Agitation and Executive Fund for the Protection of Labour to which each member was to pay one penny per month.[33] Each district was to have its own fund from a weekly payment of threepence halfpenny per member,[34] considerably more than the penny per week required in 1855. These district funds were subject to several levels of supervision. The money was to be lodged in a chartered bank in three names and the general secretary was to have details of local funds.[35] In the case of individual collieries which chose to keep their own funds trustees for these were to be appointed by the district.[36]

A clearer financial relationship between central and local unions was being set up in 1862 with the creation of a general fund and the provision of powers of surveillance over local funds. The measures providing for supervision of funds by trustees and for named account holders showed the influence of the rules of friendly societies on the union at that time. Most friendly societies since the thirties which were registered with the Assistant Registrar for Friendly Societies had rules which made similarly detailed provision for control of funds.[37]

The Miners' National Association in spite of the fact that its rules were more detailed in many respects than those of earlier unions placed responsibility for supervision of funds solely in the hands of the treasurer.[38] There were however quite specific provisions for the payment of union expenses which, for example restricted office bearers to second-class rail travel.[39] But regulations such as these were of little importance and the lack of detailed regulation of local finances shows that the Miners' National Association was a very loose federation with limited aspirations.

Careful and detailed control of local union finance was, however, once again a feature of the rules of the seven registered district unions of the years 1873-5. The rules of all seven of these unions included,

in addition to high subscription rates, sets of stringent regulations for the close supervision of union funds.[40] These regulations were virtually the same in all these unions and included provisions that all money was to be put in a common fund, kept in a bank and recorded in a bank book in safe keeping, subject to the surveillance of trustees and to quarterly audits by elected auditors and to inspection by members at will. All these provisions were laid down in the Registrar's form of registration of trade unions and stemmed from the fact that registered unions were given legal protection for their funds. The protection was only to be given if the unions met requirements which were more detailed and stringent than the financial arrangements of any previous miners' union.

In Chapter Four the importance of friendly societies in mining communities was emphasised and it was argued that trade unions endeavoured to provide benefits of a similar kind. In Ayrshire in 1824 it amounted to one pound for every widow of a collier killed at work.[41] The 1843 Miners' Association however omitted any such benefits from its rules. At its inception the association was intended only as a protective trade union with limited objectives. At the national delegate conference at Manchester in January 1844, however, 'it was resolved that the Miners' Association should be constituted a benefit society, and that the allowance should be confined to one pound on the death of a member',[42] the same as that to be provided to members' widows by the 1824 Ayrshire Association.

Although the Scottish union of 1855 made no provision for welfare benefits this did not mean that it was not thought to be a function of trade unions and the Glasgow union of 1857 had a rule whereby the bereaved family of a dead member were to receive a 'proportional share of the union's stock'.[43]

The new rules for the Scottish miners in 1862 included a specific instruction from the central to local associations that union money was to be used only to support men contending for their rights or in the

event of accident or death.[44] This was all the detail, however,which was given and no sums were stated for payment on accidents or deaths, this being left presumably to the discretion of local associations. This is rather a surprising omission since other contemporary unions like those of the engineers and ironmoulders were very specific in their regulations about benefit payments.[45]

Another related benefit provided in 1862 was for a member who emigrated. He was to have his contributions refunded with an additional ten shillings assistance from the general fund.[46]

Although the Airdrie Miners' Union of 1862 was quite specifically modelled on local friendly societies since this was to be its most important function its proposed entry fee and weekly contributions were considerably less than those of the societies it sought to emulate. Calderbank Iron Works Friendly Society required five shillings entry money and one shilling per month thereafter.[47] For the neighbouring Carnbroe Society it was three shillings entry fee and three pence per week.[48] How then would the Airdrie Miners' Union provide accident and personal aliment in addition to a strike fund? The answer is probably that it could not.

When McDonald and a union sub-committee produced yet another set of rules for the Scottish miners in 1866 it was proposed that two pence of each members weekly contribution should go to the Death and Accident Fund, still considerably less than the sums paid to community friendly societies.[49] Here again there must be doubt about the actuarial soundness of the union proposals and since there is no evidence of any benefits having been paid the doubt would be justified.

Of the seven district unions of 1873-5 six expressed the intention of providing friendly society benefits. But of these six only four, Larkhall, Hamilton, Stonehouse and Maryhill, included specific provisions for special funds and benefit payments in their rules.[50] An example of

the benefits provided by the Larkhall group of unions was the payment of eight shillings a week for the first three months of absence to a member unable to work because of an accident at work. For the next three months he would receive six shillings a week, then four shillings a week for three months and two shillings and sixpence for the last quarter of the year. This was marginally less than the benefit proposed in the 1866 rules of the Scottish Miners and yet the entry money and subscriptions for Larkhall and the other unions was considerably higher than those proposed in 1866 as Table 21 has shown. But although these district unions had a more sound actuarial basis they did not survive and again it appears that trade unionism among Clyde Valley miners failed to provide friendly society benefits for their members, unlike the miners' unions of Northern England.[51]

Regulation and Control of Membership

There were several ways in which the miners' union sought to control its members -by regulating entry to mining, by imposing a code of discipline for the conduct of union meetings, by the clear lines policy for members who were on the move and by a general control over industrial action.

Since the eighteenth century a prime function of many trade unions had been restriction of entry to a trade or occupation.[52] The attempt to regulate entry to mining dated back at least to the Glasgow and Clydesdale Union of 1817 whose rules were concerned almost entirely with this. The first clause dealt with the age regulations of miners. 'No boy under ten years of age shall be admitted to work at the coal-wall'. Thereafter a boy aged ten to thirteen had quarter of a man's work, from thirteen to fifteen, half of a man's work and from fifteen to seventeen years, three quarters. From the age of seventeen he did a full man's work and was to be a member of the association.[53] The following four clauses sought to extend the union's control over entry to mining by

imposing regulations on the employment of new untrained or 'neutral' labour. A man was to serve two years training with a collier and pay seven pounds sterling to the association before he would be admitted. Neutral boys were to serve a period of graduated introduction from the age of thirteen until they were twenty, paying seven pounds to the association over that period. A man of seventeen was to learn to be a collier in three years, a man of eighteen to learn in two years, each paying seven pounds. Colliers' orphans were to have the same opportunities as in the first clause as if their fathers were living while the son of a collier who had done other work but at age seventeen wished to enter mining could learn in three years and pay ten shillings and sixpence to the association. A man who received work in mining, having been without it was to pay two shillings.[54]

Regulations like these recurred in several miner's unions and they represent an attempt by the miners to control entry to mining and to link entry with union membership. This control was difficult to achieve in work which was relatively unskilled, requiring no formal apprenticeship and for which employers could quite readily employ extra or replacement labour. But they can be seen as perpetuating a long-standing trade union tradition which even resembled aspects of medieval craft gild organisation.

The Ayrshire rules seven years later included provisions similar to those in 1817 for the stage-by-stage introduction of a collier's son to a full man's status, and for the admission of others - boys who are not colliers' sons, neutral men over twenty and ex-colliers returning to the trade'.[55]

Both of these early unions gave priority for entry to coal mining to the sons of colliers. The entry fees for others were so high as to be prohibitive by the standards of the time. To demand seven pounds (or even five) of a miner in 1817 or 1824 would be, in many cases, to ask

the impossible. The average weekly earnings of a miner in the West of Scotland in 1817 were estimated to be 19s 11d and by 1821 they had dropped to 16s 6½d.[56] By these attempts to confine entry to colliers' sons and to discourage outsiders the leaders of both unions were seeking in some small way to maintain their wage levels.

The stipulation of each of these unions that new entrants to mining should serve a term of gradual introduction or training was another measure to restrict entry to the trade and make labour scarce. It was also an attempt to impose a kind of apprenticeship, the mark of a skilled trade and a symbol of the labour aristocracy.[57]

In some cases this could have been realised through the type of sub-contracting employment which existed in the mines. By this system boys worked in the pit for their fathers or for other adult colliers, and were paid by them.[58] Miners could also in some cases take on other men to work with them with the approval of the employers. In these circumstances the training periods specified by these rules could be enforced by the miners. But little could be done to prevent the coalmasters from employing extra labour, which they were bound to do as demand for coal grew and new mines opened during the forties and later. During the thirties however, the policy of excluding outsiders from the industry could and did succeed in the Glasgow area and contributed to the problems of destitute handloom weavers who were unable to obtain work for themselves or their children in mining and other trades.[59]

But the rapid expansion of the labour force during the forties and early fifties did not deter the authors of the 1855 Scottish rules from the inclusion of several articles which wereagain intended to restrict employment. Here these articles invite comparison with the earlier rules of 1817 and 1824. While some of the early regulations were repeated, or nearly so, in 1855, they were also in some respects carried further.

Miners' sons and the sons of dead or disabled miners were to be admitted gradually from the age of ten to full man's rights in four stages like those specified in 1817 and 1824. But in 1855 full man's status was to be reached one year earlier - at sixteen. The stages of advancement were to be - age ten to twelve - quarter of man's right, twelve to fourteen and a half - half of man's right, age fourteen and a half to sixteen - three quarters of man's right and at age sixteen - full man's right. The boy's father was to pay district dues for his son's admission.[60] A boy who was not the son of a miner and who wished to enter mining had to go through those same four stages of introduction but each stage was to be accompanied by the payment of ten shillings, a total of two pounds,[61] three pounds less than was to be paid by the Ayrshire rules of 1824 and five pounds less than required by the 1817 rules. The miner with whom this 'neutral' boy worked however, had to pay three pounds to the association and guarantee the boy's payments. These were perhaps seen as more realistic payments which some boys and men might be able to afford but which would also have a restricting effect on entry of these neutrals .

Another regulation referred to the entry of sons of drawers and reddsmen to the association. If they were under twelve years of age then normal dues were paid if over twelve they entered in the same way as neutrals.[62] That drawers' and reddsmen's sons should not have the same rights as miners' sons reflects the grades of prestige and skill which existed in mineworking. The miner or collier working with a pick at the coal face was the most important and most skilful of the mine workers and it was miners rather than drawers and others who were active in trade union affairs.

Admission to mining was subject to regulations similar to those of 1817 and 1824. For example the payment for a neutral man learning to be a collier without the help of another collier was to be seven pounds[63]

as it had been in 1817 and 1824. A variation upon the graduated training period enforced by the earlier rules is the provision in 1855 that a neutral man might become a drawer or a reddsman for the payment of one pound fifteen shillings. After three years he might 'join the picks' and become a miner by paying one pound five shillings or after four years by paying five shillings. This money was to go to the district association and 'the district committee are to admit all such as colliers and miners.'[64]

The hierarchy of mineworkers was reinforced by this regulation. To be a drawer of reddsman was seen as being a preliminary training for the more prestigious work 'at the picks'. The total amount to be paid by these neutral men for entry was three pounds or two pounds, considerably less than the sum to be paid for learning without working with a collier and presumably an incentive to become a miner by way of being a drawer or reddsman first. In discouraging neutral men from becoming miners without the help of other miners these articles were trying to maintain and increase the union's control of entry to mining but the extent to which this was usurping the employers' powers was limited. One of the articles specifies that a miner could only take a man or boy to work with him who has been accepted by the employer.[65] This was not a provision of earlier rules although in practice it may have been a necessary condition.

The efficiency of miners was also a concern of the 1855 union which had not been overtly expressed in the earlier rules. A system of fourteen day trial periods of men not considered fit to produce an adequate output was to be instituted.[66] The miners' restrictions on entry and on gradual training can also be interpreted as measures to ensure efficient mining. This could be in the interests not only of the employer but of the workmen whose output and wages depended to some extent upon one another's efficiency.

This regulation of entry into mining was given high priority by the

men of 1855 and no fewer than eight of their twenty two articles dealt with this. That they repeated some features of the 1817 and 1824 rules indicates not simply that these rules were being revived or copied but that these entry controls were part of a continuing tradition among miners' organisations in the West of Scotland. They were not always formalised in the shape of written rules but they were practised in the intervening period between 1824 and 1855.[67] By the latter date some of those controls had been altered, boys' serving period reduced and money payments often cut down. Some new regulations were added, for example about employers' approval or about distinction between miners and drawers and reddsmen. But the emphasis remains the same, the emphasis on control, restriction of entry in favour of miners' sons.

The regulations for entry in the 1862 rules were very similar to those of 1855 with the gradual increase of a miner's son's right, distinction between miners and drawers and reddsmen and entry fees for neutral men. Apart from some slight changes such as reduction of entry fees these provisions remain constant, taking up seven of the twenty five 1862 articles.[68] But during the following years the union abandoned these features of its organisation, presumably because they had become impracticable as the industry expanded.

But some measure of control over entry was revived by certain of the district unions of the early seventies. Although none of them made any provision for the gradual increase of a collier's son's rights to those of a man, the Carluke, Larkhall, Hamilton, Stonehouse and Maryhill rules all included regulations for the admission of neutrals to the association. Carluke stipulated a £3 fee to be paid by the neutral man and £2 to be paid by the operative miner with whom he was to work.[69] This operated in the situation, still common in Scottish mines at that time, where a miner employed a boy or man of his own choice as colleague to work with him, with the approval of the masters. The entry fee for

a neutral man in the Larkhall group of unions was to be decided by the executive board,[70] while in Maryhill it was to be £5 with a period of one year's work elapsing before benefits of membership could be conferred. These admission fees, while being rather less than those imposed in 1817 and 1824 were still high by the standards of the time and must again be interpreted as attempts to discourage the employment of new men with no experience of mining.

Of these seven local unions only the Wishaw and Motherwell rules acknowledged the differences between different grades of workers. While all types of mineworkers - 'Miners, Brushers, Reddsmen and Drawers in their particular position' could join these two unions, a brusher or a drawer who wished to become a miner had to pay one shilling to his union,[71] showing the degree of control which the miners had or aspired to have over the organisation of their work.

Although the substantial and detailed regulations for control which were a feature of rules up to 1862 had diminished by the end of our period the aspiration was still there in 1873 and the persistence of union leaders in this matter is another mark of the continuity of union organisation during the period.

Control of membership in the union extended beyond entry to the industry and differences of status within it. Because of the mobility of the miners which has been discussed in Chapter Four the union tried to maintain a clear lines or clearance ticket policy. In 1824 the Ayrshire miners had a rule whereby a member leaving the work where he was employed, having paid any arrears owed to the association, received a ticket stating that he was a 'clear member'. For this he paid two pence unless he had been dismissed by his employer.[72] This was one of the first indications of this 'clearance ticket' system among Scottish miners which recurred in the rules of later unions. When this collier entered another work he was to pay two shillings entry money in two instalments

to the work delegates.[73] The 1824 provision of a 'clearance ticket' was repeated in 1855 in a slightly more complex form. A member about to move from a colliery had to have a letter from his works secretary certifying that he was 'a clear member' that is not in debt to the union. In return for this as has been mentioned in Chapter Four the district clerk would give him a card ' to carry him to any work or district he may choose to enter . . . Any person producing a false line from any pit or work to the District Clerk shall pay a fine of one pound'.[74] These arrangements were more complicated than those of 1824 because the union of 1855 was to be a national one with many districts and involving more difficult administration.

The possibility of emigration added a further twist to the complexities of the miners' mobility. Chapter Six has shown that emigration was organised and encouraged in the sixties and it is therefore not surprising that the Scottish Miners' rules of 1862 included a regulation whereby any man who emigrated was to have his membership money refunded plus ten shillings assistance from the General Fund of the union.[75] There was also a rule providing for a clear line system similar to that included in 1855.[76]

Throughout the sixties district unions sought frequently to implement a policy of clear lines and to exercise control over the employment of new members. Clear lines were required of all miners entering the Wishaw district in August 1862 [77] and in the following month miners who were moving from Govan into Glasgow were obliged to pay union entry fees.[78] This type of restriction occasionally led to court cases as when William Watson a drawer at Overtown Colliery Wishaw tried to sue James Hamilton a collier at the same colliery for attempting to force him to pay union dues before being employed. The case was dismissed at Hamilton Sheriff Court.[79] But further similar court cases followed during that year.[80]

This control and restriction occasionally produced disputes between

district unions when one district excluded members from another as the Wishaw union did to Glasgow miners early in 1863.[81] But the attempts at control continued in spite of disputes and in spite of court cases such as the case Taylor versus McIvor at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court in February 1864, a case which illustrates how the control could work. John Taylor an English miner had been employed at a Hurlford pit owned by Messrs Howie. Other miners in the pit had asked Taylor on his first day if he was in the union and when he said he was not the miners went to the employer to announce that they refused to work with Taylor. When Howie moved him to another part of the colliery to work with a miner called McIvor the other miners threatened to strike and so did McIvor. Taylor then took McIvor to court charging him for loss of work at a cost of £12. The case was dismissed by the sheriff much to the delight of local miners.[82]

The well-organised districts of Wishaw and Motherwell were particularly assiduous in implementing a clear lines policy in 1866 and 1867.[83] McDonald tried to persuade the Ayrshire districts to adopt the policy in 1867.[84] It was accepted as a clear and firm function of the combined unions of Hamilton, Larkhall and Motherwell in 1870.[85] The Miners' National Association at last got round to devising a 'clearance card' system by November 1873.[86] The seven district registered unions all included in their rules provisions for transfer tickets or clear lines.[87] Here again continuity of union organisation and policy throughout the period is very evident.

Another feature of union control and discipline of its members which appeared in most sets of rules was the insistence upon orderly meetings with no drunkenness or unseemly conduct. The insistence in the 1843 Miners' Association rules was simply upon controlled, well-ordered meetings[88] but the members of the 1855 Scottish Union were required to conduct themselves 'in a quiet, orderly and discreet manner at all places

of meeting and elsewhere'.[89] The Glasgow Union rules of 1857 warned that any member whose conduct was disorderly in committee or in a general meeting might be dismissed from that meeting.[90] This orderliness of members and meetings was again required in the 1862 rules of the Scottish miners.[91] The Miners National Association took this issue much further than any of the previous unions by laying down fifteen regulations which provided for respectable, disciplined meetings and included the strictest prohibition of swearing, betting, smoking and drinking at meetings.[92] The local registered unions of the early seventies also made provision for detailed and strictly regulated meetings including the prohibition of drinking or disorderly conduct.[93]

The miners were not alone in including regulations such as these in their rules. The Scottish Iron Moulders' Union also made detailed provisions in their rules for the enforcement of sobriety and authority at meetings, provisions which had to be invoked quite frequently.[94] Both mining and ironmoulding, however, were jobs which involved sweating, dry and dusty throats and dehydration of the worker so that hard drinking often became part of their way of life as was suggested in Chapter Four. Hence the need for rules which discouraged drunken and disorderly behaviour.

But these rules were also part of a broader aim of the unions to promote law-abiding and orderly behaviour among their members and thereby to achieve respectability. The rules of several miners' unions including those of 1843, 1855 and 1862 included statements to the effect that members must be law-abiding citizens.[95] This was quite consistent with an organisation which drew up rules and regulations for administration and discipline. It was also consistent with the views of men like Alexander McDonald whose policies have been described in Chapter Six and whose economic and industrial philosophy will be discussed in Chapter Eight. What is not so clear is how far this law-abiding and respectable policy was consistent with the view of the majority of Clyde Valley miners. In terms

of the polarisation of social attitudes described in Chapter Four it belongs more obviously to the 'sober' rather than to the 'frivolous' section of the mining community.

Since striking was probably the strongest and most dangerous weapon at the disposal of unions it is not surprising that these rules sought to enforce caution as well as collective agreement over the use and support of strike action. The Ayrshire union of 1824 undertook to support members in dispute with their employers. If such men were thrown out of employment they were to receive at the most seven shillings a week from the society.[96] Members were strictly bound not to take the jobs of other members who had left work because of a dispute. As for employers who paid less than others, the association was committed ' by every way that providence may dictate to put them out of the trade'.[97] The 'militancy' of these Ayrshire miners was, however, tempered by statements of moderation. Support would only be given to members in dispute with employers for 'just and reasonable terms'. A settlement period of ten to fifteen days was to be allowed in disputes with employers before members might apply to the association for support.[98] 'It is to be understood that the colliers are to make no unreasonable demand upon their masters', warned another article.[99]

The attitude of the men of 1855 to striking was similar to that of 1824. In the event of a dispute between employers and workmen 'for an advance of wages or from any other necessary cause' the matter was to be handled by the district committee who would refer it to arbitration. If the employers refused the union would support the men on strike. If the men refused arbitration 'they place themselves beyond the pale of the association'. Any legal action which was to be taken must be referred to the district committee.[100] This insistence on arbitration before striking was similar to the settlement period laid down by the 1824 Ayrshire rules before a strike would be supported. The strike

weapon was to be used only when other measures had failed. The responsibility and discretionary power which that article gave the district committee reinforced the loose federal structure of the union with most power found at the level of the local union.

The 1862 Scottish rules again provided that no pit was to strike without consulting the district meeting which in turn might seek the advice of the union executive. Union money was only to be used to support men 'in contending for their rights'.[101]

The union policy had not changed by the time of the district unions of 1873-5. In their provisions for strikes all of these unions showed the same attitude as that shown in earlier miners' rules. No pit could strike without the permission of the executive. Arbitration was to be attempted and if it failed the striking members and their families would receive financial support from the union.[102]

There was a combination in all these rules of commitment to support members in dispute with employers with an attempted restraint in the use of the strike weapon, partly because striking was such a potentially subversive action but also because it could be very costly and damaging to the union. Arbitration was seen as a means of settling industrial disputes and the Miners' National Association built it into their rules of 1867 but only in the event of a lock-out not a strike. Arbitration was to be fixed by the district committee. At least a quarter of the workforce were to be involved before the association would recognise the dispute as a lock-out. A levy might be imposed on other districts to support the men locked out who would each receive five shillings a week while they were out.[103] As with virtually all earlier miners' rules support would only be granted if arbitration had failed.

Conclusions

Rules were a regular feature of the miners unions of our period

because the union leaders wanted efficient organisation and a controlled orderly movement. Although the specific regulations about size and nature of committees varied somewhat from 1824 until 1875 there was a recurring emphasis on office-bearers who were answerable to the union and upon the devolution of power to district unions. During the fifties committees were smaller and the general secretary appeared to have responsibility for the union's cohesion and stability but in the sixties when unions grew and when the example of friendly societies was followed more closely the committees were expanded.

The growth of the union and the extension of its functions into those of friendly societies entailed increased fees and subscriptions for control of union funds. The sharing of funds between central and local unions was gradually settled in favour of the local unions from the fifties onwards. In their provision for supervision of finances the union rules again showed the influence of friendly society regulations, but although several included specific arrangements for death and accident funds and for benefit payments they were usually of dubious viability. In this aim most of these union organisations failed.

Control of membership was a recurring function of the union and the rules illustrate the continuation and the changes in this function. Regulation of entry to mining which was such an important feature of union organisation up to 1855 or even 1862 gradually diminished during the sixties and early seventies. But it did not disappear completely and in 1873-5 there were still rules governing the admission of neutral men and the processes by which a man might graduate at the coal face as a fully recognised miner.

Among the other forms of control of members to which the union adhered quite consistently were the clear lines policy and the insistence upon orderly conduct especially at union meetings. Both of these policies were in line with those of other trade unions of the period and in line

with the general aspiration of miners' leaders to have a united, well-regulated and 'respectable' membership. It is not surprising, therefore that another consistent feature of union rules was the enforced caution and restraint over strike action which was built into the regulations for the provision of financial help. This was partly out of a fear of appearing extreme or subversive but also out of a belief based on experience that unsuccessful strikes could be ruinous to the union in terms both of morale and of finance.

Chapter Seven - Notes

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Chapter Eight

The Strike Policy of the Miners of the West of Scotland 1842-1874

Of all the tactics used by miners, whether organised by unions or not, lifting their 'graith' or tools and coming out on strike was seen to be the ultimate, most damaging and most controversial. The contemporary middle-class observers of mining in the West of Scotland like Seymour Tremenheere, Sir Archibald Alison, sheriff of Lanarkshire, David Bremner, author and journalist, A.G. Miller author and ironworks manager and numerous newspapers all agreed about the frequency of strikes in the industry and about what they thought to be their detrimental effects.

This chapter is a study of the miners' strikes of which there are records or reports between 1842 and 1874 in West Central Scotland. The study moves from a tabulated classification of these strikes according to their size and their dates on to an analysis and comparison of their causes. The fact that strikes were more frequent in some mining districts than in others will be discussed and reasons for this will be examined. The attitudes and ideology of union leaders and of rank and file miners will be examined and compared and their influence on the organisation of strikes with particular reference to those in 1842, 1856 and 1860 will be analysed. A consideration of the counter measures used by employers will be followed by a summary of the successes and failures of the miners' use of strike action.

The period 1842-74 began and ended with a widespread strike of miners in the Clyde Valley. In 1842 there was the most substantial turn-out that had ever taken place in the region, occurring at a time when the coal and iron industries were expanding rapidly. The strike gave rise to more widespread co-operation and organisation among the miners than had ever existed there before. By its spontaneity as well as its bitterness and even violence it seemed to mark a new level of

group consciousness among the mining population. The strike of 1874 was the West of Scotland miners' reaction to the onset of the 'Great Depression'. The period of expansion and prosperity in the coal and iron industries seemed to be ending as prices and wages dropped. This strike and its failure marked the end of an era in the mining history of the Clyde Valley and after 1874 trade unionism among Clyde Valley miners was in the doldrums for over five years. Hence the significance of the period 1842-1874.

Before proceeding to examine the strikes a cautionary comment must be made about the sources. While important information about individual major strikes is to be found in Home Office Papers, Lord Advocates' Papers, individual company records and Parliamentary Papers, nevertheless for a year-by-year account of the incidence and location of strikes the press has to be the main source. This presents some problems. Local newspapers in the West of Scotland were only beginning to appear in the middle of this period, from the eighteen fifties onwards, with papers like the Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser in 1855, the Hamilton Advertiser in 1856 and the Kilmarnock Standard in 1863. While some national papers such as the Northern Star, the Miners' Advocate and the Colliery Guardian reported major strikes, as did Glasgow newspapers like the Glasgow Argus and the Glasgow Herald, it is only with the coming of smaller local newspapers and with the coming of the Glasgow Sentinel which was sympathetic to trade unions, that there was frequent reporting of small-scale local strikes. Nor was every strike reported fully and accurately. What can be said is that every major strike from 1842 to 1874 was reported in most newspapers which together with other sources give us a fairly full account. Not every newspaper mentioned every strike but from the whole range there emerge references to a sufficient number of small strikes - over 130 - from the period 1856-74 to provide a picture of their frequency, location, causes, organisation and outcomes.

Extent and Frequency of Strikes

To measure and compare the extent of strikes it is most convenient to divide them into four categories, those extending over several districts, strikes in one district, strikes in two, three or four mines, and strikes in only one mine.

In the first category there were eleven in the period from 1842 until 1874. Some details of each strike are compared in Table 22. Although the figures for estimated numbers of strikers are very vague, often the conjecture of contemporary observers, they help to point up the most extensive of these strikes. They were those of 1842, 1850, 1856 and 1874 as the lists of districts involved show. These strikes are also shown to have been among those of longest duration in this category.

About strikes in the second category, those involving the mines of only one district, our information is must more fragmentary. None were recorded before 1854 and from 1854 to 1874 there are references to six, the details of which are given in Table 23. For the same period, 1854-74, Table 22 shows that there were also six strikes covering several districts so that the single-district strike may have been as regular an occurrence as the more widespread stoppage. All of these in Table 22 and Table 23 were major industrial disputes and that there should have been so many during this period is a reflection of the disturbed condition of industrial relations in West of Scotland mines.

But between these major upheavals there were frequent smaller-scale strikes. Of those in the third category strikes involving two, three or four mines, from 1855 until 1874, there are references to twenty four, as outlined in Table 24.

Strikes of this smaller scale are seen to have been quite regular in those decades and particularly frequent in the years 1862 and 1867. But these should be seen as occasional combinations of the men of a few neighbouring mines and therefore as an extension of the much more frequent

single-mine strikes, the fourth category which is enumerated year by year in Table 25. The total for that table is ninety seven strikes taking place in twenty years, an average of almost five per year. The years of most frequent strikes are seen to have been 1862 and 1866, similar to the evidence of Table 24 . But the numbers of strikes in 1861, 1863, 1864, 1867, 1868 and 1869 were also above the average and only in 1854 and 1860 were no such stoppages recorded.

Because of the inadequacy of information about the period before 1854 it is possible to attempt a summarising statistical profile of all types of strike only from 1854 to 1874. This is done in Table 26 where the totals for each category show that over the twenty years there was an average of one (1.2) major strike as in categories One and Two every two years and six lesser strikes as in categories Three and Four every year. The years which can be seen to have been most troubled were 1855-6, 1862-3, 1866-7 and 1874. These represent peaks in a fluctuating graph of strike incidence. The troughs, the years of fewer than average strikes were 1854, 1857-8, 1865, 1870-1 and 1873. The reasons for these peaks and troughs are to be found partly in the causes of the disputes.

Causes of Strikes

Most strikes were about wages, sometimes when employers refused to agree to demands for wage increases and sometimes when miners refused to accept wage cuts. These were the causes of all but one of the major strikes in the whole period 1842 to 1874. The one exception was in Airdrie district in 1854 when the cause was apparently religious. The district miners were reported to have gone on strike ' until all the Roman Catholics should be expelled'.[1] This appears to have been the only example of a strike among miners caused by religion and David Bremner, writing some fifteen years after the event is the only source of information about it. There may therefore be a reasonable doubt about the accuracy of the information. The general (and more credible) causes of strikes are

listed in Table 27. Although wage rise demands caused ten major strikes, compared to six caused by wage cuts of the latter six those in 1856 and 1874 were the most extensive strikes of the whole period.

In some of the disputes the miners professed to be striking over other grievances as well as wages. In 1844 for example the Lanarkshire miners also demanded a fairer system of weighing their output and the abolition of truck stores or company stores.[2] The Airdrie miners on strike in 1870 wanted shorter hours as well as a wage increase.[3] But in each of these cases the wage demands were the principal causes and when they were conceded the strikes ended and the other objectives were dropped.

The majority of smaller strikes also stemmed from wage rise demands or from wage cuts. There were however, nineteen out of the total of 122 which had other causes. These nineteen strikes are included in the column headed 'Other Causes' in Table 28 which shows the pattern of causes of lesser strikes. As percentages of the total these causes were in the following order of importance.

Strikes in support of wage rise demands	-	56.5 per cent
Strikes opposing wage cuts	-	20.5 per cent
Strikes arising from other causes	-	15.5 per cent
Strikes when causes are unknown	-	7.5 per cent

Over seventy seven per cent of lesser strikes and virtually all major strikes were about wages but there was clearly an important difference in circumstances between those in support of wage rise demands and those in opposition to wage cuts. Table 28 shows that these circumstances were constantly changing as causes of strikes altered from year to year from 1858 until 1868.

Wages were fluctuating even within individual years as in 1861, 1863, 1866, and 1867 and 1868. This points to the fundamental reason for the frequency of these strikes and for the bitterness which characterised

industrial relations in West of Scotland mining in this mid-Victorian period. Miners' wages were fluctuating almost constantly and in spite of all their other grievances such as weighing, truck shops and bad ventilation this was what most often brought miners to take their most serious industrial action.

From Tables 27 and 28 it can be seen that strikes in support of wage rise demands were most widespread in 1855, 1861-2, 1866-8 and 1872. Of these years 1855, 1861-2 and 1866-8 were periods of particularly frequent fluctuations in wages as the newspaper evidence on the graph in Figure Five shows. In 1872 on the other hand there was a quite regular and rapid rise in wages.

The periods of most strike activity against wage cuts according to Tables 27 and 28 were 1856, 1865, 1866-7 and 1874. Figure Five shows that in 1856 and in 1874 wages were dropping quite rapidly, from 5s 0d per day to 4s 0d in 1856 and from 8s 0d per day to 5s 0d in 1874. In 1863, however, wages dropped only during the first half of the year, during which time all these strikes took place. They were to rise again later in the year. The strike-torn years of 1866-7 saw no fewer than three substantial wage cuts, each being followed after an interval of several months, by comparable increases.

The years of comparative peace, from Tables 27 and 28 were 1857-60, 1864-5 and 1869-71. During the first and second of these periods, wages can be seen from Figure Five to have risen and fallen but never more than once a year and usually only by six pence per day. In 1857-60 it is clear from the graph that the mean wage was lower than in 1864-5 and indeed it was as low as at any time between 1855 and 1874. Yet in spite of this it was a period comparatively free from wage strikes. From 1869 until 1871 wages climbed almost continuously, apparently with little strike action.

On the strength of the evidence provided in Tables 27 and 28 and

Figure Five several observations can be made in conclusion about these wage strikes. The majority of the disputes were about miners' wage rise demands. These happened most often and most extensively at times of rapid wage fluctuation or, as in 1872, when wages and pig iron prices were rising. The periods of fluctuation also produced widespread strikes against wage reductions as did periods of steep decline in wages. These turn-outs took place irrespective of whether miners' wages were generally high or low and one of the most strike-free periods occurred when wages were comparatively low in 1857-60.

Second only to wages, the issue which most often caused miners in the Clyde Valley to lift their graith and go on strike was the system of weighing out-put. Between 1852 and 1874 at least ten strikes were recorded in the region which were caused by disputes over weighing. Four of these were in Dalry, two in Ayr and one each in Wishaw, Hamilton, Coatbridge and Larkhall.[4] The significance of this issue has already been discussed in Chapter Three.[5]

Although the Mines Act of 1860 granted miners the right to appoint their own checkweighmen in each pit to supervise and ensure fair weighing disputes continued to occur up to 1874. They led to strikes in collieries at Wishaw in 1861[6], at Ayr in 1863[7] and 1866[8], at Coatbridge in 1869[9] and at Larkhall in 1872-3[10]. When employers resisted the appointment of miners' checkweighmen, or 'justicemen' this caused further strikes at Dalry in 1862[11], Ayr in 1866[12] and Hamilton in 1869[13].

The collectivist spirit of the miners which made such frequent and widespread strikes possible was itself sometimes the cause of disputes. The spirit manifested itself in strikes in defence of trade unions, their rules and leaders or in defence of colleagues who were being victimised. For example the men of Braidwood Colliery, Carluke struck in 1852 as did the men of Sunnyside Colliery, Wishaw in 1858 in both cases because they refused to sign colliery rules which restricted their freedom to organise

unions.[14] When three colliers at Muirhouse Colliery Wishaw were sacked in November 1859 after asking for a rise of six pence per day, the whole colliery came out in support of them.[15] The same happened at Woodhall Colliery Coatbridge in October 1862 when miners who had attended union meetings had been sacked[16], and at Darnconnar Colliery Kilmarnock in January 1864 when twelve of the miners' leaders were dismissed after asking for a wage increase.[17] There were even strikes in defence of a 'closed shop' and against the employment of non-unionists at a colliery in Airdrie and at one in Maryhill, both in November 1873.[18]

Disputes at individual mines about working conditions occasionally led to withdrawal of labour. Miners struck at Newton Colliery Cambuslang in 1853 against the use of new riddles[19], at Bonnyton Colliery Kilmarnock in 1866 over the cutting of pit props[20], at North Motherwell Colliery over pay differentials between men at different workings of the mine, and at Portland Colliery Kilmarnock over the need to give warning before leaving employment or withdrawing labour.[21]

Before leaving the subject of the causes of strikes mention must be made of a very sensitive issue in industrial relations of the time which surprisingly did not produce strike action. The issue was truck. The bitterness which it caused has been explained in Chapter Three[22]. And yet although it was mentioned as one of several grievances leading to strike action on a few occasions, there is no evidence of the truck system having been the sole cause of withdrawal of labour on any occasion during this period in the West of Scotland. This was perhaps because truck was a traditional feature of many mines. It was always there and its effect was constant and therefore easier to learn to accept, unlike wage fluctuations which persistently altered miners' standard of living. Nor did truck have the same direct effect of reducing miners' earnings as the weighing system did.

Varying Incidence of Strikes between Districts

The question now arises - were some districts of the West of Scotland more 'strike-prone' than others? and if so, why? Table 29 shows the incidence of strikes in the main districts during this period. It must still be remembered that the information for the period 1842-54 is fragmentary and refers only to major strikes. For the remainder of the period, i.e. 1855-74 the figures are more complete. The table shows that there were marked differences between districts in the frequency of strikes. Two districts - Ayr/Dalmellington and Cumnock/Muirkirk had only three strikes each in the whole period. Two other districts, Kilmarnock and Glasgow/Rutherglen show a fairly consistent record of participation in major strikes, five in Kilmarnock and seven in Glasgow/Rutherglen along with quite regular minor turn-outs from 1855, fourteen in Kilmarnock and twenty seven in Glasgow/Rutherglen. The two districts of Wishaw/Motherwell and Hamilton/Larkhall saw rather later development of large scale mining operations and it was not until the fifties that mining populations were established there. But one feature of these new mining communities seems to have been their readiness to strike. There were three major strikes in each district from 1855 until 1874, thirty lesser ones in Wishaw/Motherwell and twenty two in Hamilton/Larkhall.

A quite different pattern from any of these can be seen in the three districts of Dalry, Airdrie/Coatbridge and Holytown. There the miners were extensively involved in several major strikes, particularly in the first half of the period. In Dalry there were four major strikes between 1842 and 1856, in Airdrie/Coatbridge eight and in Holytown six. But thereafter, until 1874 there was one in Dalry and two each in the other two districts. The number of smaller disputes after 1856 in these districts was also lower than in most other districts, four in Dalry, nine in Airdrie/Coatbridge and six in Holytown. From having been centres of quite intensive strike activity as in 1842 these districts by the second

half of the period had become comparatively strike-free.

How are these differences between districts and changes within some districts to be explained? It seems clear in the first place that the differences in strike incidence sprang not from differences in working conditions but rather from differences in ability to organise collective action. There is no evidence that miners in districts like Ayr and Cumnock were free of the wage fluctuations which were the cause of most strikes. Nor did wages become more stable in Dalry, Airdrie and Holytown after 1856 when strikes there became less frequent. The grievances which caused strikes existed throughout the West Central Scotland mining districts during most of the period 1842-74. But for a grievance to become a strike a measure of collectivism among the miners and some form of organisation were necessary. For this reason it is not surprising that strike action was most frequently used in districts where trade union organisation was strongest. So in Ayr and Cumnock districts where unionism had seldom if ever caught on strikes were particularly infrequent. In Glasgow and Kilmarnock shown by regular reports in the Glasgow Sentinel and Kilmarnock Standard to have been centres of union activity miners lifted their graith quite regularly. The growth and strength of miners' unions in Wishaw, Hamilton and Larkhall in the sixties and seventies was parallel to the frequency of strikes in these districts. In Airdrie, Coatbridge and Holytown there existed relatively strong union organisation from the time of the 1842 strike[23]. By the early sixties however, these organisations had all but died there[24], and a list of district organisations produced by Alexander McDonald in December 1862 and shown in Table 19 makes no mention of any union in existence in Airdrie, Coatbridge or Dalry.[25] Although the list includes a reference to a union of Holytown miners with 500 members in the following month McDonald agreed that Holytown was the worst organised mining district in the West of Scotland.[26]

The Attitudes and Ideology behind the Strikes

The use which any group of workers make of industrial action depends on their attitudes to the economic order in which they find themselves, their ideology. Any discussion of the ideology of these Scottish miners must proceed from the fundamental fact that their strikes were so frequent by the standards of mid-Victorian Britain. With an average of six involving one or more mines every year and one involving several districts every two years it cannot be argued that the miners saw strike action as an exceptional policy to be resorted to only very occasionally. They were quite a regular feature of the way of life of mining communities, more regular in some communities than in others as Table 28 has shown. Two separate but related observations about miners' ideology follow from this. The frequency of strikes indicates first the non-acceptance by miners of conventional economic orthodoxy of mid-Victorian capitalism and second a relatively strong group or even class consciousness among these mining populations. Several historians have made the point that strike action was contrary to the Victorian economic theories of the wages fund, the sanctity of supply and demand, and unfettered competition.[27] To strike as often as Clyde Valley miners did was to reject capitalist ideology of the time through collective action in self defence. It is the collective nature of this rejection involving the risk of victimisation of leaders and the likelihood of financial hardship, sometimes alleviated by subscriptions from miners elsehwere, which is the mark of strong group solidarity.

This consciousness created an ideology which although it is not clearly articulated in any set of doctrines was not any less potent as an influence on miners' industrial action. It was when attempts were made by miners' leaders to spell it out that confusion arose, and has continued to arise about its consistency. This is because these leaders frequently expressed themselves in public as being opposed to strike action. William

Cloughan, in a pamphlet published in 1846 looked forward to the miners' abandonment of strike action.

> 'Give us more education on the part of the working classes and strikes will soon become a matter of history. Why? Because intelligent men will not risk their all in a foolish contest with their employers unless they are sure of success.'[28]

An Ayrshire miners' leader, Peter Wyper of Galston, was of the same opinion and like Cloughan, his opposition was based not on a reverence for orthodox economics but on the belief that all too often strikes failed. Wyper went on to argue for a more radical alternative, co-operative ownership of mines by the miners.[29] It is not difficult to find examples of other leaders in the region who publicly opposed strike action. At a meeting of Lanarkshire miners in Hamilton in July 1866 Robert Steele, district union agent in Wishaw and Henry Malcolm of Shotts advised their members to be cautious about striking at that time.[30] Thomas Smith, an Ayrshire miner who succeeded Steele as agent in Wishaw advised Wishaw miners in January 1868 against strike action in pursuit of a wage rise and again in December 1869 he declared a general preference for constant agitation about wages rather than strike action.[31] Even after he had left Wishaw in 1870 he wrote from his home in Kilmarnock urging the Wishaw men to avoid strike action.[32]

This cautious attitude was a recurring feature of the unions. The rules of the Coal and Iron Miners' Association of Scotland, formed in 1855 declared that in the event of a dispute between employers and workmen 'for an advance of wages or from any other necessary cause' the matter was to be handled by the district committee who would refer it to arbitration. If the employers refused the union would support the men on strike. If the men refused arbitration they would 'place themselves beyond the pale of the association'.[33] Similarly the Coal and Ironstone Miners' Association of Scotland whose rules were announced in Glasgow in 1862

insisted that the strike weapon be used with great caution and that no mine was to strike without consulting the district committee.[34] The registered unions in Wishaw (1873), Motherwell (1873), Carluke (1873), Larkhall (1874), Hamilton (1874), Stonehouse (1875) and Maryhill (1875) all held the same attitudes to strikes. Arbitration was always to be tried in a dispute. No pit was to strike without the permission of the executive and when that permission was given strikers would receive financial support from the union.[35]

A great deal of attention was given to the opinions of Alexander McDonald and he frequently expressed opposition,in public, to strikes. In 1856 he wrote that his aim was 'to have strikes blotted for ever from the book of the employers' and miners' experiences'.[36] Earlier that year he had proposed a sliding scale of miners' wages related to coal prices, with the specific intention of preventing strikes.[37] In 1863 he strongly discouraged Maryhill miners from striking against a wage cut arguing that economic circumstances were not favourable.[38] He advised against stike action in Lanarkshire in 1868 when a wage demand had been rejected by employers. Instead he urged further discussion between both sides.[39] Again in 1870 McDonald tried to dissuade Wishaw miners from striking in support of a wage demand and once more he pressed the men to try further discussion and agitation rather than striking.[40] Finally in 1874 as pressure for a massive strike of West of Scotland miners built up McDonald again opposed it, urging the miners to 'let the word "strike" become obsolete'.[41] His advice in 1874 went unheeded and his opposition to the widespread strike of that year caused him to lose much of his prestige and popularity.[42]

Public statements of the kind quoted above have been taken by some historians to indicate an acceptance by McDonald of the economic theories of capitalism and of the need for class harmony. But McDonald's standpoint was more complex than that. When he spoke at a meeting of

miners in Wishaw public park in August 1864 he said again how he deplored strikes. But he went on to raise the question of who was to blame for them taking place suggesting that they were an unavoidable consequence of the poor industrial relations in the mining industry.[43] A thorough study of McDonald's many public statements reveals a substantial number of declarations of support and encouragement for strikes and of statements which were contrary to contemporary economic doctrines. At a meeting in Glasgow in May 1862, for example, McDonald denied the argument of political economists that the prosperity of the nation depended on the prosperity of the employers. He argued, almost in Keynesian terms, that higher wages for workers meant more money in circulation and therefore greater general prosperity. On this basis he went on to encourage miners at Clyde Iron Works, currently on strike, to stand firm by their demands for a wage increase.[44] He used the same economic argument at a meeting in Wishaw in June 1862 to encourage support for miners on strike in several collieries in the district.[45] In October of the following year he urged support for miners on strike in four collieries in North Glasgow[46] and in January 1864 he urged miners at Westmuir colliery near Rutherglen to strike if their employer refused to give a wage rise.[47] Later in 1864 he recalled in a speech that he had advised miners in 1857 to accept wage reductions. But now in 1864 he strongly recommended united agitation and strike action in support of demands for increased wages.[48] He committed himself to organise union support for miners on strike in Motherwell in July of 1866 and in Wishaw in 1867.[49] Peter Wyper of Galston even accused McDonald of making excessive use of strikes, bringing miners out against their own better judgement.[50]

Among his many public statements McDonald occasionally ventured a comment on economics and society and these were by no means orthodox, conventional mid-Victorian opinions which he expressed. In June 1868, for example, at a meeting in Maryhill, he declared that the depressed

condition of miners was not caused by the state of trade but by unbridled competition in industry to produce goods at any cost to the workmen. He went on to urge united action by miners to agitate for'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work',[51] and in 1870 he urged the miners of Hamilton 'to form a society to protect themselves against the inroads of capital upon labour'.[52]

If McDonald's attitudes were complex this does not mean that they were inconsistent. He opposed strike action on certain occasions when it seemed to him that it would fail. He was in general rather cautious about using it because of the damage which it could do to the finances and morale of a trade union if it failed. In this his views were in line with those of earlier miners' leaders in the region and with the whole tenor of union organisation in the industry. When he gave evidence to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions in 1868 he summarised with honesty and consistency his attitude to strikes.

> 'I am satisfied upon the whole and am able to show on the whole that strikes, although in those periods to which I have referred they have proved disastrous,yet as a whole they have been a gain to the men in wages. I will put it thus: I am satisfied upon the whole that combinations have given more to the workmen by an advance of wages than the loss has been on the other side in the way of privations or in the way of destitution caused by them.'[53]

It is therefore too simple to argue as at least one historian has done that 'the whole emphasis of his (McDonald's) message was on achieving class harmony; to go on strike was the original sin. For strikes were wasteful, costly, involved suffering and social strife, endangered the well being of the union and more likely to alienate influential friends who could assist in getting legislation through Parliament.'[54] Even this last point about the danger of alienating influential friends is not valid. McDonald's defence of strikes in his statement to the Royal

Commission on Trade Unions did his cause no harm and indeed his complete evidence impressed Lord Elcho and other members of the Commission. In a letter about the Commission to McDonald in the following year Elcho wrote 'I was very much pleased with your speech - it was the best of the lot and did credit to my countrymen and I am not the only member of the Commission who thinks so'.[55]

In being neither wholly opposed to strikes nor absolutely in favour of them McDonald may have shown a certain duality of mind in which he was torn between two apparently contradictory points of view. His humble origins, his experiences as a miner and his constant contact with the mining population probably gave him an almost instinctive sympathy for the collective defiance involved in strike action. On the other hand his university education, his comfortable financial circumstances and his elevation to a position of national prominence in regular contact with parliamentarians like Lord Elcho had the opposite influence on him. He was often concerned about 'respectability', both for himself and for his miners' unions and he saw this as an effective means of bringing about legislative reforms.

This double attitude is a not uncommon characteristic of men and women who move away from their working class background. It has also been argued that duality of outlook was a feature of several eminent Scotsmen like Lord Cockburn, R.L. Stevenson, Edwin Muir and Hugh MacDiarmid.[56] Although the idea of 'the Caledonian Antisyzygy' refers particularly to some aspects of the Scottish split mind on literature, it could be seen to be a feature of the personality of a political figure like Cockburn and perhaps of McDonald.

In spite of the fact that nearly all of their leaders expressed reservations about the policy, the West of Scotland miners made frequent use of strike action. Does this lend weight to the argument, put forward by more than one historian, that non-unionists were frequently more

militant than unionists?[57] There were certainly occasions when miners lifted their graith against the advice of union leaders and some of McDonald's attempts to prevent strikes were referred to above. The 1874 strike was the most extensive example of this kind of divergence of views. But it has been mentioned that there were also occasions when miners were encouraged to withdraw their labour when economic circumstances seemed favourable. Militancy in any event cannot always be equated with willingness to take strike action. Although union leaders may have discouraged this on some occasions they constantly urged other forms of industrial action, particularly the 'darg' policy of restricting output. This was potentially just as subversive in its economic and social implications as strike action. It interfered with the flow of production and by affecting supply could affect prices. It also involved collective agreement and sacrifice over long periods of time. By their organisation of strikes union leaders can be seen to have been both more moderate in their determination to discourage law breaking and more radical in their efforts to make strikes more successful.

Strike Organisation

Between 1842 and 1874 the two most important developments in strike organisation in the industry were a decline in violence and an increase in collective financial support for strikers. These changes were the result of the growing influence of union leaders like the men quoted above. Their policy was that if there were to be strikes then they should be conducted in such a way as to have some likelihood of success. It was therefore important first that their timing should be right. It was also important that they should be in accordance with the law and supported by money from non-striking miners.

Sir Archibald Alison, Sheriff of Lanarkshire, remarked in 1860 upon the decline of violence in disputes in the industry in West Central Scotland. He contrasted the violence of the strike of 1842

with the peacefulness and orderliness of disputes in the eighteen fifties. 'I conclude therefore', he said, 'that there is a great and growing improvement in this respect'.[58]

From 1842 until the time of Alison's speech in 1860 there were three occasions when large scale strikes of miners in West Central Scotland caused him, and the Home Office in London such alarm that they called out the local militia and summoned military reinforcements from Edinburgh and elsewhere.[59] After 1860 none of the mining disputes in the region were felt to be jeopardising law and order sufficiently to justify the use of military force. A comparison of these three strikes illustrates the increasingly law abiding form of organisation which the miners were adopting.

The 1842 strike began on the morning of Monday 1 August when the coal and ironstone miners of 147 pits in the Airdrie and Coatbridge districts struck work.[60] Soon more men came out in Holytown, Bellshill, Chapelhall, Baillieston, Kirkintilloch, Cambuslang and in parts of Ayrshire.[61] One estimate of the number of strikers was between 10,000 and 12,000.[62] Almost twenty years later in his memoirs Sheriff Alison put the figure at 20,000.[63] This seems unlikely however, as there were only 14,568 miners in the West of Scotland recorded in the census of 1841.[64] The Lanarkshire men stayed out for two and a half months and in October they returned to work, first in Airdrie, Coatbridge and Holytown.[65] By early December the Ayrshire men too were back in the pits.[66]

In addition to the concern about the strike shown by Alison and by the Home Office there was great apprehension among the gentlemen of the press. The comment of the Glasgow Saturday Post was 'This turn out would seem to be the most alarming that has ever taken place in the mining districts of the West of Scotland'.[67] As well as being worried about the extent of the strike, the authorities were very alarmed by the fact that groups of these miners were reported to be roaming the area, armed with sticks and stealing food, mainly potatoes from fields, but also livestock, bread

and milk.[68]

The reaction of Sheriff Alison and the Home Office was swift and firm. On the third day of the strike Alison moved to Airdrie with a troop of dragoons and two companies of infantry.[69] Three days later two more troops of dragoons and two troops of cavalry came by rail from Edinburgh to Castlecary station. A short nine mile march brought them to Airdrie.[70] A force of fifty police substitutes came by rail to Airdrie from Glasgow.[71] When Alison reported to the Home Office that despite their show of force the 'nightly depredations . . . by bands of marauders' were continuing, the Lanarkshire Yeomanry were called out and the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, ordered an additional regiment of cavalry from Ireland to the trouble spots.[72]

As a result of nightly patrols of Yeomanry in the mining districts with frequent searches of miners' houses, the foraging raids by strikers on potato fields and elsewhere gradually tailed off by the end of August.[73] But this was not the end of violence during the dispute. As well as occasional demonstrations of hostility towards the troops in Airdrie and Coatbridge there was intimidation, or attempted intimidation of working miners by strikers in Campsie, Hurlford and at Clyde Iron Works.[74] There was even a riot in Airdrie on 21 September when a mob of about 400 people attacked the town prison and released five prisoners.[75]

The dispute of 1856, from the last week of March until the first week of June, was even more extensive than that of 1842. About 15,000 miners from the Lanarkshire districts of Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown, Baillieston, Glasgow, Maryhill and Wishaw were out[76] along with 2,000 in Renfrewshire[77], 1,500 in Stirlingshire[78] and an indeterminate number in Ayrshire.[79]

Although there were numerous reports of intimidation of non-strikers and several riots against the police there appears to have been little or no theft and from the middle of April Sheriff Alison and the military authorities reported that the strikers were acting quite peaceably.[80]

The strikers in 1856 were much more effectively organised by their leaders than they had been in 1842 and this helps to explain their more orderly conduct. Most of the organisation in 1842 was done by district strike committees[81] with occasional meetings of delegates from other districts.[82] There were regular mass meetings of strikers to boost morale and to vote on broad tactical decisions.[83] But this form of organisation proved to be too loose to be effective. The leadership was uncertain, divided and somewhat anonymous. As a result of this the stealing of food continued in spite of opposition and disclaimers by the leaders.[84] Here lay the most serious failure of the 1842 leadership, the failure to provide financial or material support for the strikers.

By 1856 these weaknesses of organisation and leadership were being rectified by the new union of Scottish miners based on the West of Scotland with a set of rules which made detailed provision for raising finance and for strong district organisations.[85] This was to prove more effective in the West of Scotland than the growing but unstructured solidarity which had existed in 1842.[86] Throughout the 1856 dispute there were regular delegate meetings in Glasgow at which all districts on strike were represented. It was at these meetings that most of the important tactical decisions were taken such as the appointment of negotiators to meet employers and the final concession of victory to the employers.[87] The delegates at these meetings were nevertheless acting on the instructions of their local districts so that the organisation of the whole strike involved a much greater degree of co-operation and exchange of opinions between districts than had existed in 1842.

The unity and discipline of the men in 1856 were the results not only of the form of union structure which had emerged but also of the personal influence of leading union officials like Alexander McDonald. He travelled from district to district addressing large meetings of strikers, sustaining morale and giving advice. A constant theme in this advice was

the need for peaceful, lawful behaviour showing a 'respect of property and persons'.[88] This 'respectable' policy of the miners won the admiration and sympathy of the principal spokesmen of the labour aristocracy of the West of Scotland, including the United Trades Committee of Glasgow,[89] and the editor of the Glasgow Sentinel.[90]

The strike leaders took the view that if the turn-out was to be successful it should be as widespread as possible with financial support provided for the strikers. Among the collieries which were reluctant to take part in the strike were Gartsherrie and Dundyvan in Coatbridge and Chapelhall near Airdrie. The men from these mines were persuaded to come out at a large meeting at Baillieston on 14 April.[91] Many of the Gartsherrie and Dundyvan men returned to work after a week, however, with police protection provided by Sir Archibald Alison.[92] This led some strikers to resort to threats, intimidation and even violence in their efforts to bring them back out.[93] Although these methods were not what McDonald advised, they were smoothly organised as Alison reported to the Lord Advocate.

> 'The general practice of the men on strike has been to hold midnight meetings . . . at them the men are told off in bands to intimidate workmen at the various points, and perhaps in an hour afterwards they swoop down upon a place, attack the workmen, and are off in a few minutes'.[94]

But it is probable that there were only a few cases of physical violence - or threats of violence, and simple persuation was used more often than intimidation. The Procurator Fiscal of Airdrie said.

> 'If the men are only asked civilly whether they are going to attend the meeting today, I don't consider this intimidation.'[95]

Such intimidation as there was can hardly have been serious or widespread since the Sheriff-substitute of Airdrie reported in the middle of the strike that his area was satisfactorily quiet and there there was

no need to call out cavalry.[96] This was confirmed by James Baird of Gartsherrie, the largest employer of miners in Lanarkshire when he wrote at the end of April that the strikers were quite well behaved and that the peace-keeping forces were adequate.[97]

Although the leaders were successful in sustaining solidarity among the strikers throughout most of the West of Scotland, they were less successful in raising money to support the men who were out. It was agreed that miners who had won a wage rise as a result of the strike should return to work and give one shilling in every five to help the strikers. Little came of this, however, because it was not effectively organised and probably because of a reluctance among the working miners to co-operate.[98]

McDonald also issued appeals to other trade unions and to the general public for financial support. His trade union appeal made overt use of the language of class conflict.

> 'We therefore appeal to you in this struggle of labour against capital, to ask for your sympathy and aid and we trust that should a struggle come to your lot it will be ours to stand by you in your day of trial.'[99]

Promise of help came from some trades and from some of the public meetings which McDonald addressed during May. But it all proved to be rather haphazard, inadequate and probably too late to be useful. Very few strikers were to receive financial support so when the dispute was virtually over McDonald recommended that the union should levy three shillings from every member when he returned to work and thereafter ask sixpence a week 'to accumulate a fund for the support of their just rights in the future'.[100] Although subsequent meetings altered the sums which McDonald had suggested, the principle of the creation of a strike fund was accepted.

By their conduct of the strike of 1856 the newly formed union can be

accredited with substantial changes in the organisation of this form of industrial action, changes which were to affect most subsequent strikes in the region until 1874.

In 1860, the last occasion when troops were used against striking miners during the period 1842-74, over 900 men employed by Wm. Dixon came out from the middle of January until the end of March. During February several ironmasters in the Clyde Valley locked out their miners and stopped production in support of Dixon. Although the Glasgow miners' leader James Blee remarked in February, 'if the struggle continued much longer it would be a difficult matter to maintain the peace when thousands of men, women and children were starving',[101] and although Lord Belhaven and the Solicitor General persuaded the Home Office to move troops into possible trouble spots in early February,[102] the miners proved to be orderly and peaceful with little or no law-breaking, violence, theft or intimidation.

Further refinements and improvements in strike organisation were made during the 1860 dispute. The district meetings and regional delegate meetings which had operated in 1856 continued to do so in 1860 with the same democratic processes and the influence of McDonald, James Blee and men of that ilk being felt as much as ever. This time a strike committee was set up by the union which issued appeals and sent deputations to various individuals and organisations in an effort to win support.[103] An unusual feature of this strike was that it was initiated by non-unionists, employees of William Dixon being expressly forbidden to join a trade union. Instead they were enrolled in a 'Friendly and Free Labour Society' run by the company for which money was deducted from their wages.[104] But the strike came about in spite of this society and it was quickly supported by the union who became responsible for most of its organisation with only two of Dixon's employees on the strike committee.

Once again McDonald and the other leaders travelled around the mining

districts addressing meetings, drumming up support for the strikers and pouring scorn and contempt on collieries whose miners were not contributing to the strike fund.[105]

Dixon's miners were sustained during the dispute in two ways, by money raised from other mining districts and by finding temporary employment in other pits. These were both policies which McDonald supported vigorously in this and subsequent strikes and he supervised the collection and distribution of money on behalf of the strike committee. A levy of one shilling per man per week from all working miners was agreed to provide the strike fund. The men from Dixon's mines at Springfield and Huntershill, Bishopbriggs were to be sustained by subscriptions from miners in Maryhill district while the strikers from Dixon's large mines at Govan and Carfin were supported by the rest of the Scottish miners.[106] Every week McDonald published in the Glasgow Sentinel a statement of money received from each district or colliery. This was a complicated exercise involving regular communication between scattered mining districts and requiring honesty, efficiency and a sense of collective responsibility among the miners and their officials. In spite of this it was felt in the business community that the help being given to the strikers by their working brethren was being so effectively organised that it was prolonging the dispute.[107] Yet at the end of the strike there were complaints by miners that the fund was inefficiently organised and the sums paid to strikers were inadequate.[108] Not all of them had needed help as they had found work in other mines. By the middle of February, for example, only thirty six of the 135 Bishopbriggs strikers were out of work.[109] This was partly why the other ironmasters enforced a lock-out in February as one of the simplest means of ensuring that striking miners were not being re-employed in their mines. But the coalmasters did not join the lock-out. Because the process of employing miners was a fairly casual, informal matter, left to colliery managers or oversmen, it was not

difficult for more of Dixon's men to find work in their collieries.

The comparison of these three major strikes appears to confirm Sir Archibald Alison's opinion that the miners were adopting a more peaceful policy. Further confirmation is found in the conduct of smaller strikes. During the eighteen forties and early fifties reports of violence in strikes were quite frequent at Beith, for example, in 1847, at Coatbridge in 1850 and at Airdrie in 1855.[110] But throughout all the more detailed press reporting of miners' strikes between 1856 and 1874 only three cases of intimidation were mentioned, all in 1868. The first was at Addie's colliery, Maryhill in April, the second at Dixon's Govan colliery in August and the third at Galston when colliers' wives tried to force those who were returning to work to come back out on strike.[111] With the exception of these three minor incidents the peaceful law-abiding policy of McDonald and the union prevailed after 1856 until the end of this period. This was part of the process by which their strikes were more efficiently organised with stronger leadership and more vigorous attempts to provide money or alternative work for strikers. The size of a strike fund and the opportunities of re-employment were in indirect proportion to the number of men on strike so that the more strikers there were the smaller the strike fund and the fewer jobs available in the region.

But the Clyde Valley miners continued to provide money for strikers throughout the eighteen sixties and from 1858 until 1874 there were thirty nine occasions on which this policy was adopted. Thirty of these were limited to one or two collieries and therefore relatively simple to finance. The other nine were more extensive, covering several collieries in a district, and at least three of these ended with complaints and recriminations that the sums paid were too small to be of help. These were at Larkhall in 1863[112], at the Eglinton Iron Works collieries in Kilmarnock in 1863[113] and at Rosehall and Gartsherrie collieries in Coatbridge in 1866.[114]

Usually the money for strikers came from working miners in the local district and its collection and distribution was organised at district level. Twenty seven of the thirty nine strikes received this more limited district support and Kilmarnock district miners even established their own district strike fund for these occasions.[115] But the more widespread or larger strikes required help from other districts and hence more complex co-operation and organisation. This was the case on the remaining twelve of these disputes. Often the support provided was substantial and came from widely scattered sources. In 1861, for example, when the men of Titwood Colliery in Pollokshaws lifted their graith they received money from all other mining districts in the West of Scotland, with three pence being levied from each working miner per week.[116] But the collection could lead to disagreement and bickering between districts. When three hundred and twenty striking miners of two collieries in Holytown required support in 1863 a levy of sixpence per week was raised from working miners in neighbouring districts. Glasgow district failed to respond giving rise to some criticism at delegate meetings. The total sum raised on this occasion was £74 10s, being 2,980 sixpenny contributions.[117] Of the 20,500 miners in Lanarkshire[118] only a small proportion had contributed to support the Holytown strikers.

During these years the miners often tried a policy of selective strikes within a district. One colliery would be chosen to strike in support of a wage claim, the strikers being paid 'strike aliment' by the other miners of the district. If andwhen the wage rise was granted then the same claim could be put to the rest of the employers. Of the thirty nine supported strikes between 1858 and 1874 at least six were organised in this way examples of which have been quoted in Chapter One.[119]

Employers' Reactions to Strikes

While almost all middle class opinion saw strikes as dangerous,

subversive and economically ruinous, it was left to mineowners to devise tactics to oppose them. During the period 1842-74 they made use of a variety of strategies including eviction of strikers and their families from company houses, locking out the workforce of several collieries in support of employers whose miners were striking,bringing in blackleg labour, dismissing or taking other action against strike leaders and forbidding employees to join a trade union.

Of these strategies the one which was adopted most often throughout the period was eviction. From 1842 until 1874 mineowners used it on at least eighteen occasions. It was suggested in Chapter Four that employers' control of housing gave them a powerful weapon in industrial disputes as strikers' families on some occasions had to camp in neighbouring fields as they did at Lugar in August 1847 and at Airdrie in August 1870.[120] The greater hardship in winter months could quickly bring strikers to heel. It also gave rise to angry resentment and could prolong and exacerbate a strike as Captain John Davidson, the commander of the 1st Royal Lanark Militia, feared during the 1856 strike. He reported 'I do not apprehend any disturbance unless the masters carry out their intention of ejecting their workmen from their dwelling houses'.[121]

Alison reported to the Lord Advocate that several orders for ejectment of Lanarkshire miners had been issued.

> 'I have strongly recommended to the Masters not to enforce these Decrees as likely to lead to painful scenes and violent collisions.'[122]

Some unrepentant employers proceeded, however, and one of them, Lord Belhaven reported that he believed they had the desired effect of forcing the miners back to work.[123]

During the eighteen sixties employers were frequently obliged to adopt the lock-out as another method of collective self-defence. This was intended to prevent strikers from finding work in other mines and also by causing widespread hardship to bring collective pressure to bear

on strikers to return to work. The lock-out of 1860 when ironmasters in Coatbridge, Holytown and Johnstone closed their collieries in support of William Dixon against his strikers was one of the first extensive examples of this kind of collaboration in the West of Scotland.[124] Its effectiveness probably induced employers to repeat the policy on five further occasions during the following six years. To be successful a lock-out had to cover most of a mining district or more and in these five subsequent disputes when mineowners resorted to the tactic they made sure that it was on a wide scale. In 1861 for example all the miners in Kilmarnock district were locked out after a strike. The miners were defeated and it was this experience which led them to establish a district strike fund.[125] In the following year a strike by 107 miners at Sunnyside Colliery Wishaw led to 400 other men being locked out at six other collieries in the district.[126] The mineowners of Rutherglen district used the policy a month after the Wishaw lock-out of 1862 in response to the attempt by the miners at a selective strike at Stonelaw colliery to force a wage increase. On this occasion many of the miners moved to Wishaw at McDonald's suggestion to find work and by August the Rutherglen employers were ready to concede a rise of one shilling per day to their employees.[127]

A more extensive lock-out was enforced in March and April of 1863 by mineowners in Wishaw, Larkhall and Hamilton. It grew from a strike at Scott and Gilmour's colliery, Wishaw against a wage cut to four shillings per day. Because of the extent of the lock-out other jobs were difficult to find for the miners. The eviction policy of some employers together with the inability of the union to provide enough money to relieve hardship all helped to bring about victory for the employers by April when the men accepted the wage and returned to work.[128]

When the Wishaw miners attempted a selective strike at Scott and Gilmour's in June of 1867 to bring about a wage rise the employers of

Wishaw, Larkhall and Hamilton with those of Motherwell again combined to lock-out their workers for two weeks and again they were successful. No wage increase was given.[129]

These lock-outs of the eighteen sixties were the result of a growing co-operative spirit among the employers of the region. During the strike of 1856 the Sheriff of Ayrshire remarked that 'the miners seem more skilled in combination than their Masters'.[130] This was hardly surprising given the variety of companies of different sizes, run by individual entrepreneurs in competition with one another. And yet by the sixties although the first major lock-out of 1860 was carried out entirely by ironmasters, the subsequent uses of the policy in Kilmarnock, Rutherglen, Wishaw, Motherwell, Larkhall and Hamilton all involved co-operation by all mineowners whatever their scale or whatever their market.

There were examples of material support among employers of an informal nature like the letter sent by Bairds' manager at Gartsherrie, J. Alexander, to all contractors of Bairds' pits in April 1863.

> 'We are desirous that none of the men at present on strike against the coalmasters should be employed at our works . . . Employ nobody if you have the slightest reason to think he is from a colliery on strike. Any at present employed please dismiss'.[131]

But this supportive relationship was also becoming more institutionalised and a Coalmasters and Ironmasters Defence Association was formed.[132] The employers met frequently in district groups and it was at a meeting of the Wishaw district coalmasters in March 1865 that the lock-out of the district collieries was agreed upon.[133] But this unity of spirit was shortlived and by 1866 the Colliery Guardian was urging the need for mineowners to unite again for self protection. 'Unless this is done', said the writer 'and is done speedily, labour will have the supremacy of capital and total disorganisation and decay will be the result.'[134]

The masters could take individual action against strikes and a method widely used during the eighteen forties was simply to recruit new labour. At that period it was quite a feasible policy because the constant flow of Irish immigrants into the West of Scotland provided a ready labour force and also because the miners' attempts at trade unionism were so sporadic that there was often little opposition to blackleg or 'nob' labour as it was called in the region.[135] By the eighteen sixties, however, employers made only infrequent use of nob labour with only six reports of their employment between 1856 and 1874. These men were recruited sometimes from the local population as at Portland Colliery Kilmarnock in 1863 and at Caprington in the same district in 1865 when unemployed weavers were used to break strikes.[136] Nob labour was brought from Cornwall to Wishaw during the lock-out of 1867 and William Dixon brought men from Staffordshire to Govan during a strike in 1868.[137] But the policy had serious disadvantages for the owners. The new recruits, if they were local weavers or from some other occupation, could not be expected to learn the work quickly enough to produce sufficient coal to break the strike. The other drawback was the fierce resistance of the miners to nobs and the hostility which the policy could engender. On five of the six reported occasions when nobs were recruited between 1856 and 1874, they had to be dismissed again as a result of vigorous opposition by the regular miners.

A few employers tried forbidding trade unionism and sacking all strike leaders or potential leaders. Dixon used this policy at Govan in 1860 and the company sacked more strike leaders in 1862[138] but the policy does not seem to have been effective because the Govan miners withdrew their labour again in 1863, 1865, 1866, 1868, 1871 and 1874. Not many other owners used this form of victimisation because it could have the opposite to the desired effect by causing further strike action. It has been mentioned above that the sacking of miners' leaders produced

this result at Davidson's colliery, Wishaw in November 1859, at Woodhall Colliery, Coatbridge in October 1862 and at Darnconner Colliery, Kilmarnock in January 1864. Bairds of Gartsherrie, on the other hand, appear to have been comparatively successful in discouraging strikes among their workforce. This was achieved by a combination of legal action against strikers, refusal to employ strikers from other collieries, the creation of a disciplined, controlled workforce by use of contractors and by enforcing a firm, paternalist regime through company housing and schools.[139]

Apart from these counter measures which the owners could adopt they could simply 'sit out' a strike hoping that they could survive for longer than the strikers. This depended on the coal stocks which they had available or upon other sources of coal, which most ironmasters had from their other collieries. McDonald realised that the success or failure of a strike could depend upon the coal stocks and upon the current market price for coal and iron. If stocks were low then a strike could cause embarrassment and expense for mineowners. In January 1850, for example, because of a strike at Cambuslang colliery, the owner, the Duke of Hamilton, was obliged to buy coal to meet some of his own requirements.[140] Even the mighty Bairds of Gartsherrie were unable to supply coal to a client company because of a colliers' strike in June 1866.[141]

Effectiveness of Strikes

Unfortunately, when newspapers reported these disputes they did not always record how they were settled. Of the seventeen major strikes tabulated above in Tables 22 and 23 the results of thirteen are known and of the 122 smaller strikes in Tables 24 and 25 the outcomes of fifty seven were reported.

The major strikes in the period 1842-74 ended in failure slightly more often than in success. The successful turnouts were in 1842, 1844, 1855, 1866 and 1870 and the failures in 1847, 1856, 1860, 1863, 1867 (two strikes) and 1874. The widespread strike of 1850 ended with success

in Lanarkshire but failure in Ayrshire. During the period from 1856 until 1874 there were many more failures for the miners, the only two successes in 1866 and 1870 being in strikes of a relatively smaller scale. Their disastrous defeat in 1856, the lockouts of 1860, 1863 and 1867 and the other disastrous defeat in 1874 showed that their employers were in a stronger situation in disputes of this scale.

The fifty seven smaller strikes in the period 1855-74 had a quite different pattern of results with thirty seven ending in victory for the miners and twenty in defeat. The smaller strike was easier to organise and to support from outside sources. It could be used selectively and rapidly when the time seemed appropriate and therefore had more chance of success.

But success or failure could be influenced by the nature of the miners' demands in any strike. They succeeded more often when they were pressing wage rises and they failed more often when they were opposing wage cuts as Tables 30 and 31 show.

In general the miners of the region had little success in opposing wage cuts but their strikes did have the effect of forcing wages up quite frequently during the period. A relationship had emerged between owners and men whereby wage rises were often refused until after a strike had taken place. This relationship was demonstrated particularly blatantly from 1870 until 1872 when despite the fact that coal and iron prices were rising a district strike of Airdrie miners and six individual colliery strikes in other districts were necessary before wage rises were given. This was symptomatic of the tension and mistrust which existed in the industry.

Conclusion

The picture which emerges is of a system of industrial relations of which the strike was a regular feature. The miners lifted their graith most often over wage disputes and particularly in support of demands for

wage increases. But in the more isolated mining districts of the Clyde Valley, particularly those where employment was dominated by ironmasters, strikes were less frequent. The large districts with more diversified industry like Glasgow, Kilmarnock and later Wishaw and Hamilton had a constantly high strike level whereas Airdrie, Coatbridge and Holytown which were active districts in the strikes of the eighteen forties and fifties became much less so in the sixties and seventies. This variation is explained by different levels of union organisation between districts, by different standards of leadership emerging in each and perhaps by differences in numbers of immigrant workers.

The use which these miners made of the strike weapon represented a consistent and regular rejection of Victorian economic theory and a collectivist philosophy of self-defence. Although most miners' leaders urged caution and restraint upon their followers it was not because they opposed strikes for ideological reasons but rather because they feared the consequences of failure. Alexander McDonald was a frequent advocate and organiser of strikes and an exponent of social and economic opinions which contemporary Victorians thought of as subversive and anti-capitalist. Despite his occasional disagreement with working miners about strike policy he was usually in harmony with the men. This harmony enabled him and other miners' leaders from 1856 until 1874 to influence the organisation of strikes and the conduct of strikes so that they were better co-ordinated, less violent and in many cases more adequately financed than before.

In spite of eviction from company houses and lock-outs by their masters the miners persistently withdrew their labour and even the use of 'nob' workers and victimisation could not succeed as retaliatory tactics. Although the majority of the large-scale strikes were failures this was not the case with smaller, one or two-colliery turn-outs over sixty per cent of which ended with victory for the miners, usually producing a wage rise. This record of success helped to persuade miners to make regular use of the policy which also had the effect of strengthening their solidarity.

Chapter Eight - Notes

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Chapter Nine

The Darg and Other Policies of the Miners 1842-74

While the strike was a regular feature of life in Clyde Valley mining communities throughout our period, it was only one of a range of policies adopted by the miners sometimes under the auspices of a formally organised union but often as a spontaneous response to a particular problem or grievance. The most constant and long lasting of the other policies was the darg, associated with the demand for shorter hours. Political action including petitions and deputations to Parliament for improved conditions were particularly favoured as policy by union leaders like Alexander McDonald and with this went the use of legal action against employers to defend miners' rights and conditions as new legislation was produced. There were also periods when the emigration of large number of miners was organised and supported by the union as a means of sustaining wage levels. A more ambitious aspiration was the policy of co-operative ownership o f land and of mines which was regularly discussed and agreed upon at miners' meetings throughout the period - but seldom taken any further.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine more closely each of these policies, the reasoning which lay behind them, their implementation and effects.

The Darg and Short Hours Policies

When the miners combined to restrict their work and output they did so by either agreeing on the quantity of coal to which each man would confine himself to producing each day or by agreeing on the number of hours per day which each man would work or by having an agreed holiday from work every so often, perhaps one day per fortnight. These policies were agreed at pit meetings or at larger district or delegate meetings and if most men were in favour they could be implemented quite easily because of the working conditions described in Chapter Two whereby individual miners

had considerable control over their own work rate, particularly in stoop-and-room mines. Dundas Simpson, an oversman in a colliery belonging to the Monkland Iron and Steel Company in the forties explained the methods by which the miners enforced restriction on their colleagues. 'Those who attempt /to exceed the darg/ have their lights blown out and are annoyed in the pit in various ways.' He described the miners' meetings at which those who exceeded the darg were put on trial and obliged to pay fines. 'There are leaders in every pit who regulate these matters. The fines imposed are spent in whisky.'[1] Although Simpson as an oversman was undoubtedly a prejudiced witness and gave a particularly unfavourable account of the policy nevertheless it is likely that occasionally some measure of harassment and collective pressure was used to enforce a restricted darg on all miners.

During the fifties, however, the union which was usually at pains to avoid violence or intimidation tried to have miners' hours reduced through legislation to a statutory eight hours. The Glasgow miners were among the first to approach Parliament on the matter when they sent a petition requesting an eight-hour working day in October 1851.[2] This policy was widely adopted throughout West of Scotland mining districts by 1856 and from then until 1859 several such petitions were organised and sent, one of which was delivered to Westminster by McDonald in person in 1859.[3] The Mines Act of 1860, however, did nothing to reduce working hours and the campaign continued throughout our period with district unions adopting from time to time a short hours policy. In most mines this policy could only be applied to working hours at the coal face since the winding gear was usually managed by an oversman who would not allow miners simply to go back up to the surface whenever they wished.[4]

Restricted working had been regularly adopted by West of Scotland miners since at least the eighteen twenties[5] and it remained a recommended policy of local unions until the eighties.[6] Over the period 1842-74 it

was implemented at district level and over large parts of the whole region during at least sixteen years as Table 32 shows. The table lists some of the principal instances of restriction of which there is evidence but doubtless there were numerous other occasions when a 'wee darg' was implemented on a smaller scale at the level of a few neighbouring pits.

The general chronological pattern which emerges from Table 32 is of quite regular use of reduced dargs during the forties but much less so in the fifties when union activity was either infrequent and tentative as in the first half of the decade or concentrating on petitions for shorter hours after the failure of the strike of 1856. The restricted darg revived as a policy in the sixties and was put into operation along with shorter working hours regularly until the end of our period.

But as with strikes and with union activity in general the incidence of restriction was related to fluctuations in prices and wages. In Chapter Two the point was made that miners' productivity in the West of Scotland tended to drop at periods of high wages[7] and this is endorsed by Table 32. Figure 5 showed that three peak years for pig iron prices and for miners' wages were 1854, 1866 and 1872-3 all of which are seen in Table 32 to have been years of extensive restriction of output. The same was the case in certain years when wages were beginning to climb such as 1863 and 1870-1. The corollary to this is also demonstrated by Figure 5 and Table 32 as the periods of lower wages 1850-3, 1856-63 and 1869 also periods when the darg was only seldom reduced. Only occasionally did the miners put the policy into operation at these times, for example in April-June 1861[8] and in the summer of 1868.[9] But these were both periods when wages appeared to be rising but were to drop again later in the year whereupon the restricted working was abandoned on each occasion.

This correlation between restricted output and rising wages points to the two central aims of the policy, to reduce stocks so that prices might be sustained and to allow the miners to do less work for the same or even

more money. As a form of industrial action it clearly sprang from several quite different beliefs and attitudes. There was the belief that wage levels will inevitably depend upon the price of iron and coal and that restriction of coal supply and stocks would keep prices up. There was also the collective attitude of restraint so that young and strong men would produce and earn only as much as older or weaker colleagues. Finally there was the miners' dislike of their work already mentioned in Chapter Two and their wish for more leisure. The form of restriction which best suited this last attitude was the idle day which was regularly observed for example in 1863 and in 1866.[10] On their idle days miners were free to attend union meetings and to pursue their other private leisure activities.

William Cloughan was one of the first miners to explain the aims and the effects of restriction of labour in his pamphlet entitled A Series of Letters on the Restriction of Labour and its Effects in the Mines of Lanarkshire which was published in Coatbridge in 1846. This was an attempt to justify the reduced darg and to defend it against the criticisms of Seymour Tremenheere the Commissioner for Mining Districts who devoted considerable space to the subject in his reports of 1844 and 1845. The questions which they raised were to remain central to the discussion of the policy throughout our period. Their disagreements were about five basic issues; the effect of restriction on wages, its implications for miners' working hours, the benefits or otherwise of the increasing number of jobs which the policy seemed to be creating, its influence on trade unionism and on industrial relations generally in mining districts and finally its economic consequences for the coal trade.

Cloughan argued that although restriction involved miners in the short term in deliberately earning less, in the long term it kept wages higher and more stable.[11] Tremenheere's view was that the wages of miners who were ahering to a reduced darg were lower than those of miners

who were not and that the policy which emanated from 'a species of communism' had the effect of preventing the men from saving and improving their lot in life.[12]

Who was right? Up to a point both were right. There were occasions when, as Cloughan said, wages were forced up as a result of reduced output by the miners. The strike of 1844, for example, was a victory for the miners because restriction in the previous months had kept coal stocks low.[13] The wage increases of 1866 were brought about partly as a result of this policy. William Ferrie collieries' manager for the Monkland Iron and Steel Company for example reported that he was obliged under the circumstances to give the miners a rise of sixpence per day in April.[14] Henry Malcolm announced in June at a miners' meeting that short time working and restriction had produced wage rises throughout the West of Scotland.[15] But at no time does it appear to have prevented a wage cut since the policy was almost invariably put into operation when wage rates were either at a peak or were rising and was usually abandoned when wages fell except for some forlorn attempts early in 1874.[16] Tremenheere's argument about miners being unable to save is only partly true. Clearly not all miners would ever have considered saving and those who did usually contributed to the friendly societies described in Chapter Four. But that was only to provide a small measure of economic security and not the substantial self-improvement which Tremenheere felt they should and could aspire to. He believed that miners could accumulate sufficient money to be able to leave the industry, something which only a few, among them Alexander McDonald, proved able to do. The vast majority worked out their entire lives as miners but for economic and social reasons which were much more complex than simply restricted output.

The work of the miners was so hard and physically so demanding that, according to Cloughan, the working hours had to be restricted.[17] He also argued that shorter hours would give miners the opportunity to improve

themselves in various ways particularly through education. As proof of this he quoted figures to show that of approximately 360 boys working in Holytown collieries in 1843 109 were attending evening school. By 1845, however, when the reduced darg had been adopted the number at evening school had risen to 316 out of the same total number of boys working. These arguments for reduced hours and for self-improvement recurred in the eighteen fifties when McDonald was organising petitions for an eight-hour day[18] and throughout the short-time agitation up to the end of our period and beyond.[19]

Tremenheere took the view that a reduced darg did not represent a fair day's work and he cited examples of young men who could turn out their darg in five hours.[20] Cloughan's reply to this was that Tremenheere and other middle-class critics of the policy had no experience or understanding of the exhausting nature of mining.'How grateful the working man ought to be', Cloughan wrote 'for leave to toil'.[21] Tremenheere himself had three months holiday each year and it is difficult to believe that he could fully understand the miners' attitudes.[22]

A further defence of restriction put forward by Cloughan was that it produced more jobs. Tremenheere had argued that it had forced employers to bring in large numbers of new workers, mostly from Ireland with undesirable social and economic consequences.[23] While Cloughan accepted that the labour force had increased he did not think that the consequences for miners were undesirable, nor would he be likely to think so since he was Irish-born himself. His argument, however, had a humanitarian ring to it.

> 'Indeed Scotchmen must kill themselves with working in order that Irishmen may be compelled to remain at home and work at home for 8d a day and not even have the comfort of "skeely to their murphies".'[24]

But however humanitarian his attitude really was it did not represent the views of most trade unionists. The rules of miners' unions up to

1855 often contained measures to restrict entry into the industry as Chapter Seven has shown and from the late fifties onwards McDonald and the union were encouraging miners to emigrate to U.S.A. in order to reduce the labour force so that its bargaining position might be strengthened. But although Cloughan may have misjudged the effects of an increased labour force on trade unionism the policy of restriction which he advocated could not be held responsible for the massive increase in the mining population of the Clyde Valley which took place during this period.

At several points in his pamphlet Cloughan commented on the injustices and abuses to which miners were subjected in their working and living conditions, in particular the weighing systems, truck and housing. He maintained, however, that the adoption of restricted labour policies had had a radicalising effect on the miners and that they were becoming less submissive than in the past and less willing to put up with these conditions.[25] As evidence of this he cited the case of the miners of Summerlee in Coatbridge whose conditions of work were particularly objectionable because, according to Cloughan, they had no union and practised no restriction. This link between restriction and trade unionism was central to his argument because he saw the policy as being one of the fundamental functions of the union. 'Without the restriction of labour' he argued, 'the Union would be no better than a dead letter; it is to the Union what the mainspring is to a watch'.[26]

In a sense Tremenheere agreed with Cloughan's argument here but did not share his satisfaction at the outcome. He believed that the reduced darg damaged industrial relations and led to tensions, disputes and strikes in many pits.[27] He went on to advance the argument that although restriction had strengthened the union, it was the union which was often enforcing the policy on unwilling miners.

It must have been difficult on occasions for the union to get sufficient

numbers of miners to agree to the policy because of the element of financial sacrifice involved and it was equally difficult to organise, enforce and sustain. And yet in spite of these difficulties it was adopted and implemented time after time as Table 32 indicated, reflecting the strength of the union which advocated and organised the policy and also the miners' recurring militancy which, as Cloughan argued, the policy helped to sustain.

But the miners did not reduce their darg on every occasion when the union urged it. In 1855 for example when wages began to drop a meeting of Hurlford miners rejected the suggestion of working a wee darg.[28] When McDonald urged the reduction of output at a delegate meeting in March of 1864 there was no response from the members and when a later delegate meeting in November of the same year agreed to the policy the men in the pits did not act upon it.[29] The same happened when McDonald again argued for its adoption in Ayrshire in 1867, a year of falling wages.[30] When the Wishaw miners abandoned the darg and short hours at the end of 1868 when wages had dropped, their agent, Thomas Smith, criticised them persistently and bitterly.[31]

Although there was some restriction of output in 1844 when wages were low, in general throughout this period the miners only reduced their labour when they felt they could afford to. This does not mean that wage cuts were meekly accepted by the miners on all occasions. Chapter Eight, Tables 27 and 28 have shown that the miners' response was often to take strike action in spite of the advice of union leaders and instead of restricted output which they suggested in 1856, 1864, 1867, 1869 and 1874. This was arguably a more radical reaction, made possible by the organisation and solidarity created during the periods of restricted output. In this respect Cloughan appears to have been wrong when he argued that restriction would replace strikes and make them unnecessary.[32]

Chapters Five and Six have shown that organised restriction of labour

was often the mark of a well organised district trade union and the policy was adopted and vigorously pursued only in districts where trade unionism was strong, in Hurlford, Glasgow and Kilmarnock for example in 1863,[33] or in Hamilton and Larkhall in 1870.[34] In order that it should have an effect on the market price of coal and iron, this policy had to be as widespread as possible. There was little value in the men of one colliery reducing their darg if all neighbouring collieries were still producing at full capacity. When a whole district was working at reduced output then local prices would be influenced. But better still from the miners' point of view was the situation when the whole region of West Central Scotland was involved in the policy for then it ensured that most supplies of coal could be kept down and prices kept up. This widespread implementation of restriction was again only possible at periods of widespread trade unionism such as 1844-5, 1847-8, 1861, 1868 and 1872.

The effects of reduced labour on the industry and coal trade produced another pedictable disagreement between Cloughan and Tremenheere. The former argued that miners were simply trying to combat over-production which benefited nobody.[35] It was Tremenheere's view that the effect of their action was to lower productivity, reduce profits and cause the industry to be less efficient.[36]

Although the coal and iron trade prospered throughout the most of our period the fluctuating productivity of miners shown in Figure 4 and discussed in Chapter Two would seem to indicate that in some respects Tremenheere was right in this matter. Productivity could have been higher but for the restriction by the miners. Similarly because the policy occasionally had the effect of pushing up wages when prices would permit then it is clear that there was a reduction in the profit margins which the mineowners would otherwise have enjoyed. Whether they would have ploughed these profits back to make the industry more efficient

is another question.

This whole 'debate' between Cloughan and Tremenheere can be seen to have been relevant to the reduction of miners' labour up to and beyond 1874. It helps to illuminate the miners' aims for wages and better conditions and the objections to these aims. It also provides a yard-stick against which to measure later uses of restriction and its general outcomes.

In summary it can be said that restricted labour took the forms of reduced weight of coal produced and the cutting of working hours or days. Its aims were to sustain wages at an acceptable and equal level for all miners and to allow them to work less. As a form of industrial action it dated back at least to the eighteen twenties and was adopted regularly throughout the forties. It was less popular in the fifties although the miners submitted several petitions then for shorter hours. The policy revived in the sixties and continued to be implemented until well beyond the end of our period.

In most cases restriction was adopted at times when wages were either rising or were at a peak. When wages fell the policy was abandoned, often in favour of strike action. But during periods of generally low wages and prices labour was not usually reduced. Although the wage fluctuations of the period show that restriction did not succeed in stabilising wages or in preventing very frequent cuts it does appear to have succeeded on some occasions in pushing wages up. There was often a reduction of miners working hours and working weeks which allowed for more leisure, more trade union activity and in some cases more opportunity for education. This had the effect of reducing productivity in the industry as Chapter Two has shown. It also contributed to the increased employment of new labour in the industry, an outcome which most trade unionists did not desire. Finally the policy was a main plank in the trade union platform of the period. It sprang from and also encouraged solidarity among the miners but it did not have the effect of

reducing strikes. Indeed its failure to prevent wage cuts can be seen to have caused strikes.

Emigration

Just as the restriction of labour was a constant union policy throughout our period so too was the restriction of the labour force. In Chapter Seven it was explained that union rules up to and including those of the Scottish miners in 1862 contained provisions by which entry into mining was controlled requiring a cash payment by the entrant and a time-serving period akin to an apprenticeship.[37] Although measures such as these were reduced in rules subsequently this did not mean that the union accepted the inevitability of an unlimited labour force. McDonald believed that a restricted supply of labour could help to sustain wages just as a restricted supply of coal could sustain prices.

He had argued for planned and assisted emigration of miners as early as 1856 but it was not until 1864 that this policy was adopted and organised on a large scale by which time McDonald was corresponding with several mineowners from U.S.A. acquiring information about wages and conditions there.[38] His description of high wages and good working conditions was challenged, however, by John McAdam, who claimed in a letter to the Glasgow Herald to have knowledge and experience of quite different circumstances. He claimed that prices were high in and around Boston and that job prospects were not good.[39] But McDonald continued to encourage emigration, occasionally recommending particular collieries about which he had information and which he considered to be suitable for intending emigrants.[40]

By the Spring of 1865 several district emigration societies were formed. The members usually paid sixpence per week into the emigration fund. The choice of emigrants whose passage would be paid or supported was by ballot in which all paying members had the chance of being drawn.

In April and May at least three parties each over one hundred men, women and children set sail from the Clyde for the U.S.A. aboard ships of the Anchor line.[41] There were further departures and more emigration societies formed during the summer of 1865 in spite of John Muir's newspaper letters expressing grave reservations about the policy.[42] Towards the end of 1865, however, wages began to rise and emigration of miners began to slow down. McDonald continued to press the policy during the following years and small numbers were still leaving the West of Scotland in 1869[43] but by then new pits were opening in Lanarkshire and in 1870 wages began to rise. With these improved prospects at home emigration lost its relevance as a union policy for the time being.

Petitions and Pressure for Legislation

A strong and continuous theme of union activity throughout this period was the attempt to secure redress of grievances or improvements in conditions by means of the judicial and legislative authorities both locally and nationally. Petitions and deputations were regularly organised sometimes to local officials like Sir Archibald Alison[44] and to the Lord Advocate[45] and most frequently to Parliament. The last category were particularly frequent in the later eighteen fifties during the first years of McDonald's ascendancy. He was so impressed by the courtesy and sympathy with which he was received at the House of Commons in 1856 that he remained a firm believer that Parliamentary legislation was the means by which the miners' lot could be permanently improved.[46] This belief lasted up to and beyond his election to Parliament in 1874.[47] During the sixties and early seventies,however, he organised fewer petitions and sought instead to use his personal influence through friends like Lord Elcho, through the parliamentary committee of the T.U.C. and through his evidence to several Select Committees and Royal Commissions.

One of the most regular complaints about which the miners submitted petitions was the weighing of output. In Chapter Three this issue, its effects on miners' wages and some of the changes brought about by the Mines Act of 1860 were discussed.[48] It is worth emphasising at this point that the Mines Act was partly a result of McDonald's policy of petitions and lobbying of Members of Parliament. He paid particular tribute to A.F. Kinnaird M.P. who had given him valuable assistance and had supported the Scottish miners' cause in Parliament.[49] The provision of the Act which entitled miners to appoint their own checkweighman at each pit-head was felt to be the most likely device for solving the weighing abuses and complaints. The events of the following years showed this to have been over-optimistic as other grievances emerged.

The role of the checkweighman in trade unions has recently come in for re-interpretation. Dr. Challinor has disputed the Webbs' view that these justicemen provided 'a practically inexhaustible supply of efficient Trade Union secretaries or labour representatives'.[50] He argues that employers in most British coalfields by threats and dismissals secured the appointment of checkweighmen who were acceptable to themselves and that they continued to wield power over the appointees in order to force them to adopt a submissive attitude.[51] This theory has been taken up by Mr. John Foster who suggests that the emergence of this type of justiceman produced a new 'authority structure' among the miners of Oldham, which served to bring about a drift to the right in mining politics in the town.[52]

To find a position in the Webbs v. Challinor disagreement in West Central Scotland is difficult because the evidence is rather fragmentary. It is not clear in how many pits the miners took advantage of their opportunity to appoint justicemen. Early in 1861 they were being demanded and appointed in numerous pits in Glasgow, Maryhill and several districts in Lanarkshire.[53] But there was resistance from some employers especially

in Ayrshire. James Merry of Merry and Cunninghame refused to agree in 1862 to the miners' right to appoint such officials at several ironstone pits near Dalry and in two cases men whom the miners had nominated were forced from the pithead.[54] In the following year J.T. Gordon the owner of Annbank Colliery Ayr was obliged to agree to the establishment of a checkweighman at his pithead after a long strike about this and other grievances.[55] But in both of these cases the dispute was not about the miners' nominees but about their right to nominate in the first place.

Resistance to this process did not come from employers alone. The justicemen were to be paid by subscriptions from the men and predictably there were some miners who refused to pay. A number of court cases resulted when the miners of a pit or their committee tried to sue defaulting colleagues.[56] The few who were taken to court would be merely the tip of the iceberg and in other collieries no organisation or appointment whatsoever would materialise. But in many cases the miners did become organised and they did make appointments, even if some had to strike to assert their right. This would seem to indicate the importance which at least some of them, and their employers, attached to the issue. The very process of appointment created a need for organisation and agreement among the men and there is no evidence to show that miners or their leaders in the Clyde Valley became more Conservative in politics under the influence of this new 'authority structure'. It is not clear, however, whether justicemen were becoming union leaders. Some of the most prominent district agents of the sixties and early seventies gained office outwith their home districts, men like Henry Malcolm who moved from Shotts to Hamilton and then Holytown, George Anderson who moved from Holytown to Wishaw or Thomas Smith the Wishaw agent whose home was in Kilmarnock. If these men had been checkweighmen they had to leave their home districts to become union leaders. The dismissal of Andrew McCowie a union leader in Hamilton from his position as justiceman at a local

colliery in 1869[57] partly confirms Challinor's argument. But the very fact that McCowie combined both roles for a period of time is also evidence to support the Webbs.

The answer to the problem may lie somewhere between the two interpretations. The policy of appointing justicemen was pursued vigorously in several districts even to the point of striking or taking legal action. As a result complaints about weighing were reduced but not completely removed and the union continued to express these residual grievances. It seems unlikely that all of this would have happened if the justicemen were merely conciliators as Challinor claims. But the dismissal of McCowie and the lack of clear evidence of the continuous supply of justicemen - cum - union leaders must cause the Webb's argument also to be questioned in its application to the Clyde Valley.

In their numerous petitions of the fifties the miners frequently referred to pit ventilation and the need for stronger safety measures. and inspection of these by the Mines Inspectors.[58] The act of 1860 was in sympathy with these points and the powers of Inspectors were extended and new safety regulations introduced, apparently another vindication of McDonald's Parliamentary policy.[59] But the miners did not give an unreserved welcome to the Act. There were objections from several Lanarkshire collieries to the new rules which owners were introducing to prohibit union activity. McDonald himself was critical of the fact that the Act continued to permit deductions or 'offtakes' from miners' wages for the services of colliery blacksmiths, schoolteachers and doctors. He was particularly critical of the fact that Catholic miners were forced to pay teachers who were not of their denomination. 'He did not speak as a Roman Catholic but as a man who wished liberty for all alike.'[60]

Although the Act tightened up safety measures in pits it also contained a provision which worried and displeased McDonald and his members. This was a special rule whereby miners were to satisfy themselves as to

the safety of the mine before going down, thus apparently taking the responsibility away from the employers. But in spite of these reservations most of the Act was welcomed in the Clyde Valley and McDonald's faith in Parliament was confirmed.

During the remainder of our period, as was pointed out in Chapter Six, McDonald on the miners' behalf made more frequent visits to London and became more involved in trade union and Parliamentary politics. He also gave evidence to several Parliamentary committees as part of the British miners' policy and as part of a British story relevant only marginally to developments in the West of Scotland. Most of his evidence to committees, however, was drawn from his experience among West of Scotland miners and he explained all their principal grievances to the Select Committee on Mines in May 1866 putting particular emphasis on truck, weighing, safety and ventilation regulations, offtakes and provision of education.[61]

Later in May 1866 he again cited examples from the West of Scotland in his evidence to the Select Committee on Master and Servant. He argued that in Lanarkshire mines, contracts between miners and employers did not usually exist and that as a consequence both parties had greater freedom. The miners could stop work without giving notice and without fear of imprisonment for breach of contract.[62] He insisted that no dispute between master and servant should come before the justices of the peace because he felt them to be incompetent to judge such questions. He gave his reasons

> 'In the large coal districts of Lanarkshire the greater portion of the justices who act are colliery managers, doctors attending the collieries, bakers and well-to-do grocers who supply the truck shops with goods, that is the class who have control as acting justices in Lanarkshire.'[63]

Despite these complaints, however, McDonald was persuaded by Elcho in the following year that reform of the law would require compromise. He agreed to the inclusion of imprisonment for workmen on failure to fulfil

contract and he even obtained the agreement of the Glasgow Master and Servant Amendment Committee to this concession.[64] When the new Master and Servant Act emerged Elcho gave McDonald credit for having had a large share in forming it[65], although it was criticised by other trade unionists.[66]

McDonald's knowledge and experience of trade unionism in the Clyde Valley also provided most of his evidence to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions 1868[67] He described changes in miners' working conditions, his own developing career and the growth and functions of trade unions among the men. He argued that the union had brought them improvements in living standards in spite of opposition from owners but with the assistance of Parliament. Again he took the opportunity to explain the miners' continuing grievances in the West of Scotland including truck, weighing, offtakes. Throughout his evidence McDonald repeated his opinions on strikes, wages and prices and the other functions of trade unions which have already been discussed in Chapters Six and Eight.

The Truck Commission in 1871 provided McDonald with yet another opportunity to describe and comment upon aspects of the mining industry in the West of Scotland. This was a particularly important opportunity because he had criticised the truck system so bitterly for fifteen years and his evidence on this occasion was an influential contribution to the Commission's inquiry.[68]

McDonald's participation in committees and the policy of petitions and deputations which the miners had adopted during this period had a variety of quite specific objectives but they were all based on the assumption that Parliament and Government could be persuaded to see the justice of the miners' cause and to carry out the required legal, industrial and social reforms. There were only a few occasions, however, when the miners became actively involved in politics in order to reform Parliament itself and to participate more directly in its deliberations. In 1842, when the Chartists were organising miners' meetings in Lanarkshire

at which resolutions were passed in favour of the People's Charter it seemed as though the miners of the region were becoming committed to the cause. This commitment did not materialise, however,[69] and apart from having occasional Chartist speakers at meetings the miners' unions of the forties took no further interest in Parliamentary reform. It was not until 1866 that the issue arose again when miners' leaders and district unions took part in reform demonstrations. When the Liberal party introduced amendments to the Scotch Reform Bill in 1868 the Wishaw miners' union expressed their united disapproval at a mass meeting.[70] With the passing of the Act working class representation became more feasible and there began the process, also described in Chapter Six by which Alexander McDonald became a Member of Parliament with the financial support of the miners of West Central Scotland.

Litigation

The unions' consistent belief in Parliament and legislation as means of securing improvements in rights and conditions had the corollary that the law courts could and should also be used to defend such rights as the miners had. In 1844 the Miners' Association of Great Britain set up a Law and Victim Fund in Ayrshire to provide legal assistance for members who were being evicted from their homes or victimised in some other way.[71] This was one of the principal policies of the association whose legal adviser W.P. Roberts had been at pains to assure Scottish members that he was agent for miners in all parts of Britain.[72] It was not until the late fifties and early sixties, however, that a policy of organised legal action in defence of miners or against employers was again in operation throughout the Clyde Valley. Airdrie district miners set up their own Law Protection fund in 1857[73] and by 1859 McDonald was organising legal help for miners in several districts who were being evicted. In 1861 he established within the union a Law Protection fund for all Scottish

miners which was well subscribed and as a result of the 1860 Mines Act had many opportunities for court action against employers.[74] Although he was bitterly critical of the class prejudice of Justices of the Peace, McDonald was quite prepared to take cases to the Sheriff courts and by September of 1861 the Law Protection fund had helped miners or their families to win seventeen court cases against colliery owners.[75] Of these, twelve were claims for damages or compensation for injuries or deaths of relatives in the pits. Two were prosecutions of mineowners or their officials under the new inspection provisions of the 1860 Act and the remaining three were cases involving illegal wage deductions, wrongful dismissal and inaccurate weighing of output. During the following years the union continued to provide legal assistance for its members particularly at times of eviction during strikes but the policy of litigation was not pursued as vigorously again as it had been in 1861, partly because employers gave less opportunity but also because legal fees were costly and a regularly subscribed fund was required, something which the union always found difficult to sustain.

Co-operative Ownership

The idea of co-operative ownership of property or the means of production appealed to trade unionists among the Clyde Valley miners throughout our period, just as it appealed to other sections of the labour movement. It was probably William Cloughan's influence which persuaded the Holytown miners in 1845 to raise a fund to finance co-operative ownership of land.[76] The intention, as Cloughan explained it, was that miners and other unemployed workers would farm the land so that there would be no unemployment, labour would be scarce and therefore wages higher. Cheaper food would also be produced thus obviating the need to repeal the Corn Laws.[77] The venture was to be organised as a co-operative joint-stock company and although it came to nothing, the idea lived on.

In 1856, McDonald urged district unions to 'bring before your fellow workmen the propriety of joint stock companies'.[78] But he was suggesting that these companies be formed to acquire pits so that the miners could run them in accordance with their own ideas and free of the grievances and injustices which they were currently labouring under.[79] Although the men of Hurlford district took up McDonald's suggestion and formed a co-operative for this purpose early in 1857 the organisational task was beyond them and it too came to nothing.[80]

No other attempt at co-operative ownership was made during the rest of the fifties but in 1861 Alexander Campbell, the veteran Owenite now with the Glasgow Sentinel, toured some of the Clyde Valley mining districts explaining and urging co-operation as an appropriate policy for the miners' union.[81] Although his arguments were very sympathetically received, by McDonald as much as by any others, there was no further action.

During the subsequent years of our period the idea of co-operative ownership was occasionally trotted out by union speakers, almost for rhetorical purposes. It was a vague, symbolic plan, a means by which the miners might hope to remove themselves from under their capitalist employers. But a union whose very existence was subject to such uncertainty and fluctuation and whose energies were expended on strikes, dargs and the other policies could hardly be expected to undertake such a vast and costly enterprise as this.

Conclusions

Continuity of organisation was one of the principal features of the miners trade unionism explained in Chapters Five and Six. Analogous to that was the continuity of ideas and policies outlined in this Chapter. The idea that restriction of supply of coal or of labour would sustain prices and wages lay behind the policies of reduced darg, shorter hours

and emigration. Although these policies took different forms at various times during the period the underlying aims remained constant.

The same can be said of the union's use of Parliament and the law to obtain improvements or to defend rights. Although these policies had their origins in the forties they were put into operation very much more frequently after the emergence of Alexander McDonald. He pursued his policy of petitions and Parliamentary lobbying quite indefatigably throughout the period from 1855 until 1874. The defence of miners and their rights in the law courts was also a continuous union policy, one which was pursued particularly vigorously and more aggressively for a short period in 1861.

The more unorthodox ideology which underlay the notion of co-operation attracted these miners and their leaders fairly regularly during these decades. But the union had neither the power nor the conviction required to put the ideology into practice.

The purpose of trade unionism among the West of Scotland miners varied according to the economic circumstances. There were periods when the organisation of strikes or of restricted output absorbed the union's energy and mobilised widespread support. There were also periods when there was more political or even litigious activity to defend or improve rights. These policies changed as prices and wages rose and fell but they were all adopted with varying regularity throughout our period.

There may also have been different perceptions of the purpose of trade unionism between the leaders and the rank-and-file miners. While in general the leaders sought a form ofconsistent organisation similar to that of unions like the A.S.E., most miners only joined or supported the union when there was a specific occasion or issue. But in spite of that, and in spite of changes and growth in the industry and the mining population the union organisation survived, often tenuously , and with regular changes of name and constitution, but still in the same basic form.

Chapter Nine - Notes

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7. See above p.47
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31. Hamilton Advertiser 20 March 1869

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66. Harrison, Before the Socialists 298

Kauffman, 'Lord Elcho' 195-7

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74. Colliery Guardian 11 May 1861

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81. Hamilton Advertiser 4 May, 15, 21 June 1861

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44. Hamilton Advertiser February 1861

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APPENDIX

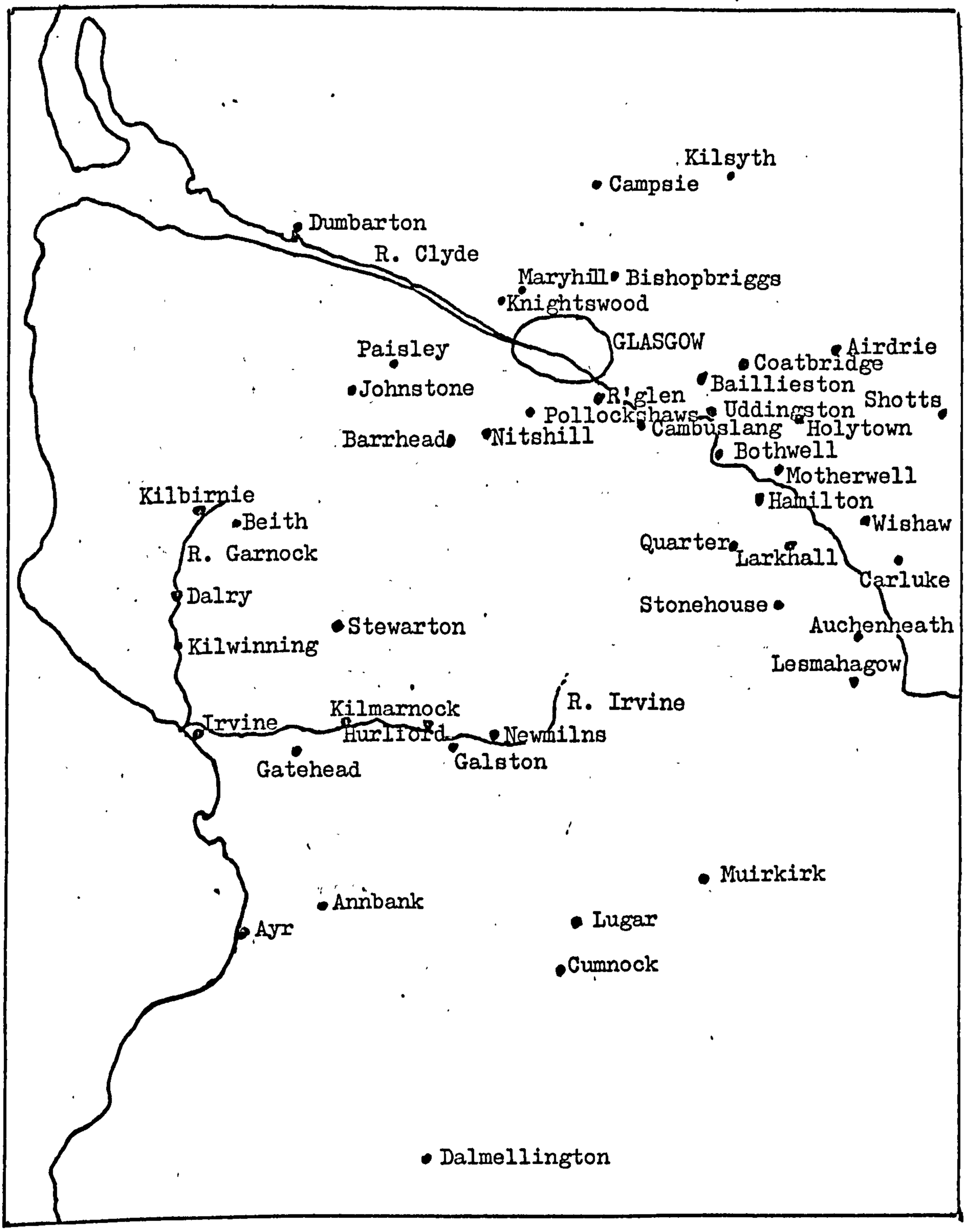

Figure 1 : Map of West Central Scotland Showing Principal Mining Communities of Mid-nineteenth Century.

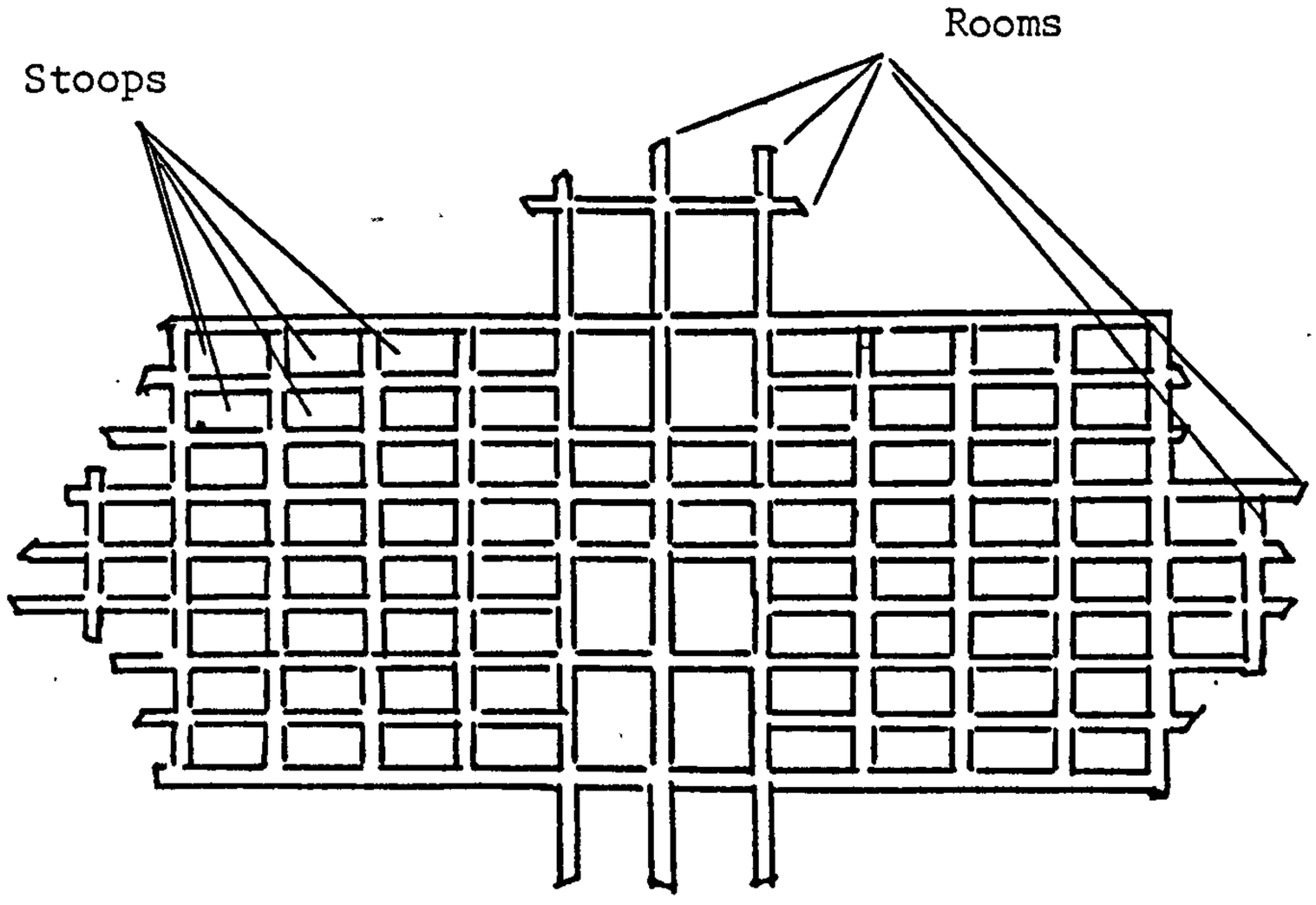

Figure 2: Plan of Stoop-and-Room Mine

Source: George M. Bailes Modern Mining Practice IV (Sheffield n.d.) 16

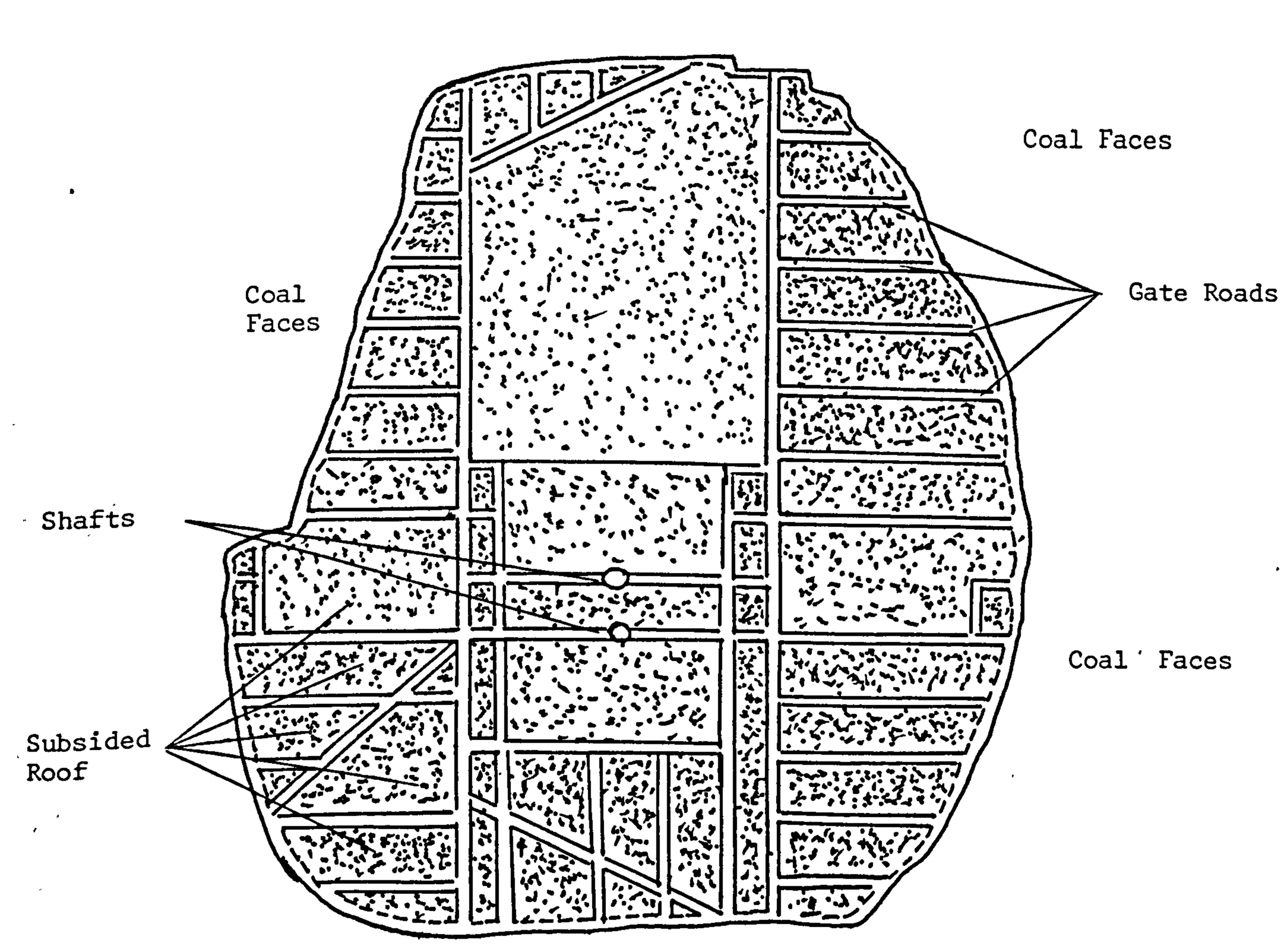

Figure 3: Plan of Longwall Mine

Source: Bailes Modern Mining Practice 18-22

Sources for Figure 4:

Reports of Mines Inspectors, West and East Scotland 1861-74

Richard Meade The Coal and Iron Industries of the United Kingdom (London 1882) 274

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Meade Coal and Iron Industries 280

Airdrie Advertiser passim

Colliery Guardian passim

Glasgow Sentinel passim

Hamilton Advertiser passim

Kilmarnock Standard passim

Figure 4 : Fluctuations in Output per Man per Year in Scottish Collieries 1861-74

Key ——— West of Scotland (excluding East Lanarkshire) from Mines Inspector's Figures

..... West of Scotland (excluding East Lanarkshire) from Meade's Figures

——— Average for Whole of Scotland

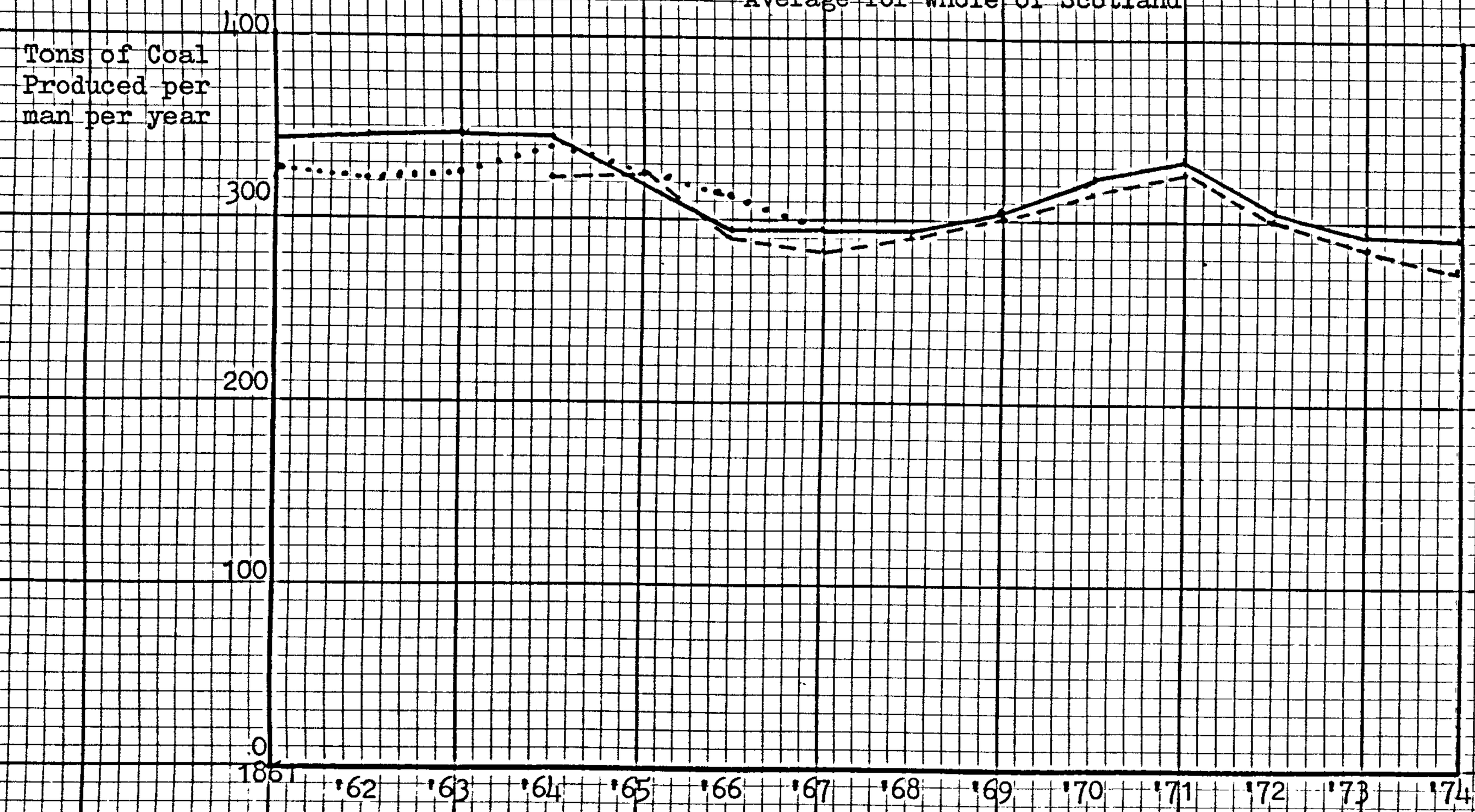

FIGURE 5 : GRAPH OF FLUCTUATIONS IN COAL MINERS' WAGES AND PIG IRON PRICES IN WEST OF SCOTLAND 1850-74

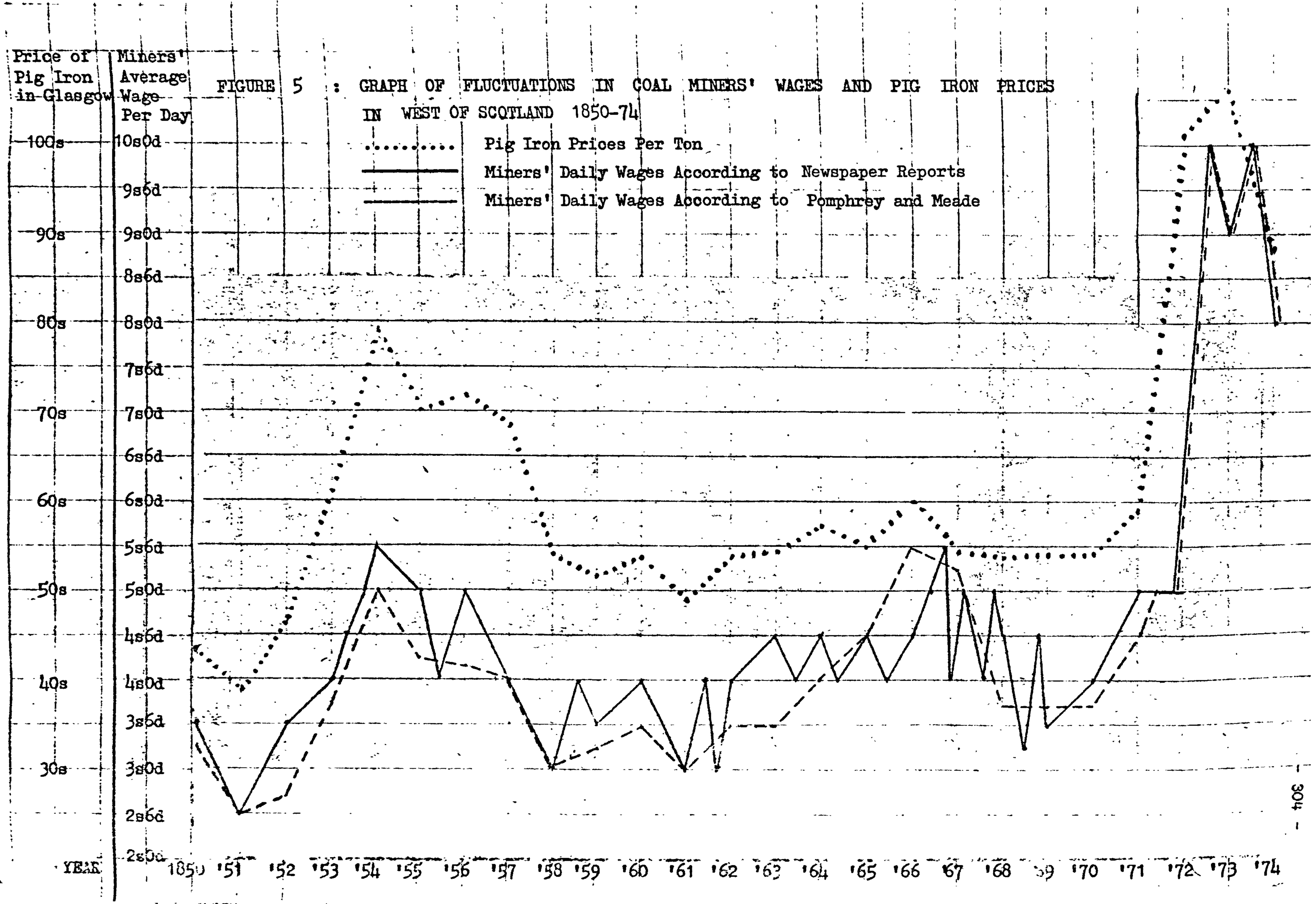

Figure 6: The Quarter Store in village of Quarter Lanarkshire showing adjoining house for manager and public-house to the rear.

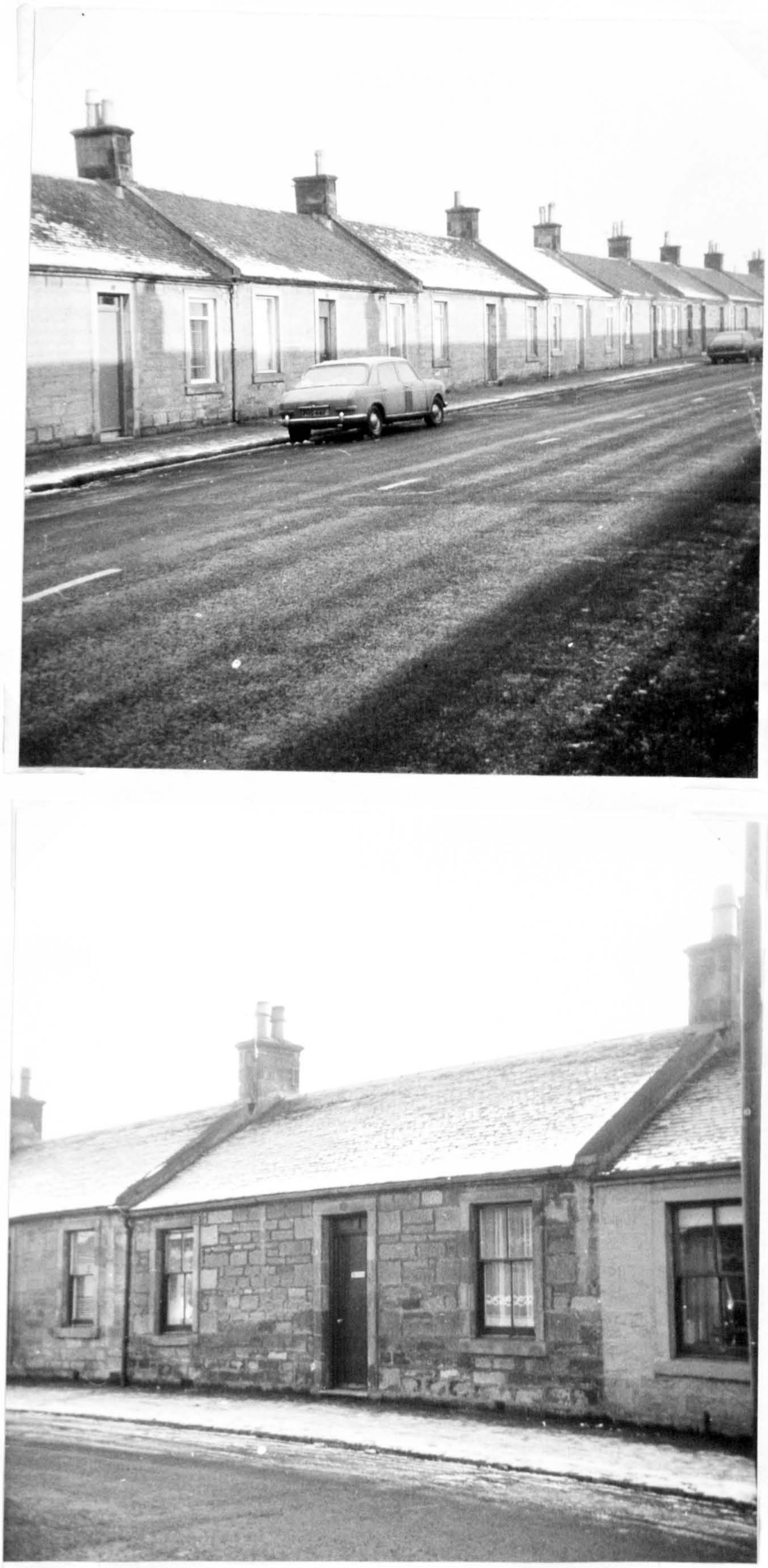

Figure 7: Houses in McNeil Street, Larkhall.

Figure 8: Houses in Main Street, Holytown.

Table 1: The Location and Ownership of Mines of the West of Scotland 1842/74

	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862
Ayrshire									
Dalry-Irvine	20	25	26			23	23	23	24
Kilmarnock	23	30	30			32	33	33	33
Cumnock-Muirkirk	20	20	21			21	20	19	19
Ayr-Dalmellington	15	17	16			15	15	15	15
County Total	78	92	93	100	94	91	91	90	91
Lanarkshire									
Glasgow	14	14	15			15	15	14	14
Rutherglen	11	11	11			10	10	10	10
Shettleston	6	6	7			4	4	4	4
Baillieston	13	15	16			14	14	15	15
Coatbridge	18	18	16			13	14	14	14
Airdrie (New Monkland)	34	35	37			38	41	38	42
Holytown (Bothwell)	15	14	13			13	13	13	17
Motherwell (Dalzell)	4	4	4			7	7	7	9
Wishaw (Cambusnethan)	18	18	18			22	22	22	23
Hamilton-Lesmahagow	20	22	22			28	31	33	36
Shotts									
County Total	153	157	159	168	167	164	171	169	184
Renfrewshire									
County Total	7	11	11	12	10	9	9	8	9
Dunbartonshire									
County Total	11	11	11	11	12	12	12	14	13
West Stirlingshire									
County Total	15	16	16	16	16	16	19	19	20
Total for Region	264	287	290	307	299	292	302	300	317

	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874 Coal	1874 Iron-Stone
Ayrshire													
Dalry-Irvine	24	24	25	25	25	25	26	26	26	29	33	33	26
Kilmarnock	32	35	37	36	33	31	31	34	34	36	36	35	0
Cumnock-Muirkirk	26	28	24	23	25	23	22	18	18	19	23	24	13
Ayr-Dalmellington	14	14	14	13	11	8	8	8	8	9	15	16	7
County Total	96	101	100	97	94	87	87	86	86	93	107	108	46
Lanarkshire													
Glasgow	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	12		10
Rutherglen	10	10	10	10	10	9	8	7	7	7	11	21	0
Shettleston	4	4	4	4	4	6	7	7	7	7	7	26	0
Baillieston	15	18	18	19	17	17	15	19	19	19	21		0
Coatbridge	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	17	0
Airdrie (New Monkland)	48	49	49	49	53	43	41	42	42	42	44	54	12
Holytown (Bothwell)	20	21	21	21	23	17	17	16	16	20	20	22	3
Motherwell (Dalzell)	9	9	9	10	10	11	9						
Wishaw (Cambusnethan)	25	26	26	31	31	26	29	27	27	36	35	38	1
Hamilton-Lesmahagow	37	37	37	34	39	32	30	25	27	47	45	61	17
Shotts								6	4	16	15	24	10
County Total	196	202	202	216	215	189	185	178	178	225	226	263	53
Renfrewshire													
County Total	11	11	11	10	10	12	11	14	14	15	15	14	13
Dunbartonshire													
County Total	16	17	17	16	14	12	12	11	11	11	12	12	8
West Stirlingshire													
County Total	21	23	24	23	23	22	22	21	21	24	27	27	13
Total for Region	340	354	354	362	356	322	317	310	310	368	387	424	133

Sources: Report of Inspectors of Mines East and West Scotland 1874 (c.1216)193-238

Robert Hunt Mineral Statistics of the United Kingdom 1854-1874 (London 1855-1875)

Table 2: Collieries Which Opened or Closed in West of Scotland 1854-74

District	No. of Collieries Closed 1854-74		No. of Collieries Working Throughout		No. of Collieries Newly Opened 1854-74	
Ayrshire						
Dalry-Irvine	6		14		19	
Kilmarnock	4		19		16	
Cumnock-Muirkirk	8		12		12	
Ayr-Dalmellington	12		3		13	
County Total		30		48		60
Lanarkshire						
Glasgow	6		8		7	
Rutherglen	5		6			
Shettleston	4		2		17	
Baillieston	6		7			
Coatbridge	7		11		6	
Airdrie	18		16		38	
Holytown	6		9		13	
Motherwell	1		3		23	
Wishaw	6		12			
Hamilton etc.	9		11		50	
Shotts					24	
County Total	68		85		178	
Renfrewshire						
County Total	4		3		11	
Dunbartonshire						
County Total	6		5		7	
West Stirlingshire						
County Total	4		11		16	
Total for Region	112		152		272	

Sources: Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1854, 127-134

Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1864, 184-8

Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1870-4, 260-6

Table 3: Ownership of Collieries 1854-74

District	1854 Collieries Owned By		1864 Collieries Owned By		1874 Collieries Owned By	
	Coal Masters	Iron Masters	Coal Masters	Iron Masters	Coal Masters	Iron Masters
Ayrshire						
Dalry-Irvine	12	8	12	12	20	13
Kilmarnock	19	4	23	12	25	10
Cumnock-Muirkirk	9	11	15	13	14	10
Ayr-Dalmellington	11	4	10	4	8	8
County Total	51	27	60	41	67	41
Lanarkshire						
Glasgow	5	9	1	13	9	12
Rutherglen	8	3	7	3		
Shettleston	6	0	4	0	24	2
Baillieston	9	4	13	5		
Coatbridge	2	16	3	11	7	10
Airdrie	22	12	32	17	45	9
Holytown	5	9	8	13	11	11
Motherwell	1	3	6	3	18	20
Wishaw	12	6	15	11		
Hamilton etc.	16	4	29	8	48	13
Shotts					20	4
County Total	86	66	118	84	182	81
Renfrewshire						
County Total	4	3	6	5	10	4
Dunbartonshire						
County Total	10	1	11	6	6	6
West Stirlingshire						
County Total	15	0	16	7	19	8
Total for Region	166	97	211	143	284	140

Sources: Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1854, 127-134

Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1864, 184-8

Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1870-4, 260-6

Table 4: Collieries Owned by Ironmasters I

Districts and Companies	1854	1864	1874	
				Iron Mines
Ayrshire				
Dalry-Irvine				
Merry and Cunninghame	5	7	8	16
Eglinton Iron Co.	3	5	5	6
Kilmarnock				
Merry and Cunninghame	2	5	5	3
Portland Iron Co./Eglinton Iron Co.	2	4	5(Egl)	
Cumnock-Muirkirk				
New Cumnock Iron Co.	3			
John Wilson - Later Eglinton Iron Co.	7	8(Egl)	10(Egl)	13
Portland Iron Co." " " "	1	4		
Ayr-Dalmellington				
Dalmellington Iron Co.	4	3	6	5
Merry and Cunninghame			2	
Largest Owners in Ayrshire				
Merry and Cunninghame	7	12	15	19
John Wilson	7			
Eglinton Iron Co. (Bairds)	3	13	20	19
Portland Iron Co.	3	8		
Dalmellington Iron Co.	4	3	6	5
Lanarkshire				
Glasgow-Rutherglen				
W. Dixon	3	4	2	2
Wilson and Co./Summerlee Iron Co.	4	5	3(Summ)	3
Dunlop (Colin and James)	4	4	4	2
Carron Co.	1	1	1	1
Addie and Co.		1	1	1
Monkland Iron Co.		1	1	1
Baillieston-Shettleston				
Blochairn Iron Co.	1	1		
Glasgow Iron Co.	2	3		
James Merry	1	1		
Wm. Baird			1	
Dunlop			1	

Table 4: (Cont'd) II

	1854	1864	1874	Iron Mines
Coatbridge				
Merry and Cunninghame	1	1		
Wilson & Co./Summerlee Iron Co.	7	4	3(Summ)	
Wm. Baird	4	4	5	
Addie and Co.	4	2	1	
W. Dixon			1	
Airdrie				
Wilson & Co.	2	4		
Wm. Baird	6	5	3	1
W. Dixon	2	2		
Monkland Iron and Steel Co.	2	2	3	1
Addie & Co.		4	1	
Shotts Iron Co.			2	1
Carron Co.				1
Holytown				
Addie & Co.			1	
W. Dixon	2	2	1	
Merry and Cunninghame	3	2	2	
Monkland Iron and Steel Co.	2	3	3	
Wm. Baird	1		1	
Mossend Iron Co.	1	2	2	
Coltness Iron Co.		4		
Motherwell-Wishaw				
Blochairn Iron Co.			1	
Glasgow Iron Co.			7	
Wilson & Co./Summerlee Iron Co.	4	3	1(Summ)	
Shotts Iron Co.	4	5	1	
Coltness Iron Co.	1	2	6	1
Addie and Co.		2	1	
Wishaw Iron Co.		1		
Merry and Cunninghame		1	2	
Hamilton-Dalserf-Lesmahagow				
Shotts Iron Co.	1	1	2	1
W. Dixon	1	1	2	
Dunlop	2	2	2	7
Monkland Iron & Steel Co.		1	1	
Wilson & Co./Summerlee Iron Co.		1	1(Summ)	
Merry and Cunninghame		1	2	1
Coltness Iron Co.		1	1	2
Glasgow Iron Co.			1	
Craignethan Iron Co.			1	

Table 4: (Cont'd) III

	1854	1864	1874	Iron Mines
Shotts				
Addie & Co.			1	1
Monkland Iron & Steel Co.			1	
Shotts Iron Co.			1	3
Omoa and Cleland Iron & Coltness Iron Co.			3	3
Lanarkshire County Totals				
W. Dixon	8	9	6	3
Wilson & Co./Summerlee Iron Co.	17	17	8(Summ)	3
Dunlop (Colin & James)	6	6	7	9
Addie & Co.	4	8	6	2
Monkland Iron and Steel Co.	4	7	9	2
Blochairn Iron Co.	1	1	1	
Glasgow Iron Co.	2	3	7	
Merry and Cunninghame	5	6	6	2
Wm. Baird	10	9	10	1
Shotts Iron Co.	5	6	6	4
Mossend Iron Co.	1	2	2	
Coltness Iron Co.	1	7	7	6
Renfrewshire				
Wilson and Co.	2			
Dunlop		1		4
W. Dixon		2	2	2
Merry and Cunninghame		1	2	5
Addie and Co.				1
Dunbartonshire				
Wilson and Co./Summerlee Iron Co.	1	2	1(Summ)	2
Wm. Baird		3	2	1
Merry and Cunninghame		1		
West Stirlingshire				
Wm. Baird		5	6	10
Addie and Co.		2	1	1
Carron Co.			1	1

Sources: Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1854, 127-134

Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1864, 184-8

Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1874, 260-6

Table 5: Principal Colliery-Owning Iron Masters of West Scotland

Name of Company	1854 Numbers of Collieries Owned	1864 Numbers of Collieries Owned	1874 Numbers of Collieries Owned	1874 Ironstone Mines
Wm. Baird/Eglinton Iron Co.	13	30	38	31
Merry and Cunninghame	10	16	26	31
Wilson and Co.	27	19		
Summerlee Iron Co.			9	5
W. Dixon	8	11	8	6
Dunlop (Colin & James)	6	7	7	13
Addie and Co.	4	10	7	4
Monkland Iron and Steel Co.	4	7	9	2
Portland Iron Co.		8		
Dalmellington Iron Co.	4	3	6	5
Shotts Iron Co.	5	6	6	4
Coltness Iron Co.	1.	7	7	6
Glasgow Iron Co.	2	3	7	

Sources: Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1854, 127-134
Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1864, 184-8
Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1874, 260-6

Table 6: Principal Colliery-Owning Coalmasters In West of Scotland - 1874

A. Finnie (Ayrshire)	9	Collieries
W. Black and Sons (Airdrie)	4	"
Drumgray Coal Co. (Airdrie)	4	"
Archibald Russell (Lanarkshire)	4	"
Barr and Higgins	4	"
Allan, Gilmour and Co.	3	"
Armour and Fulton	3	"
Lanemark Coal Co.	3	"
Dunn Brother	3	"
Provanhall Coal Co.	3	"
Lesmahagow Coal Co.	3	"
Andrew Spencer	3	"
John Watson	3	"

Sources: Hunt, Mineral Statistics 1874, 260-6

Table 7: Depth of Downcast Shafts in East Lanarkshire Collieries 1873

Depth	Number of Pits
10 feet - 99 feet	61
100 " - 199 "	100
200 " - 299 "	54
300 " - 399 "	52
400 " - 499 "	39
500 " - 599 "	15
600 " - 699 "	7
700 " - 799 "	6
800 " - 899 "	9
900 " - 999 "	1

Source: Report of Inspector of Mines, East Scotland 1873 (c.1056) 166-199

Table 8: Coal Output of West of Scotland

Year	Output in Tons		Output from East Lanarkshire
	Mines Inspector's Figures	R. Meade's Figures	
1856	4,800,000	4,500,000	
1857	5,613,473	5,613,473	
1858	5,620.000	5,620.000	
1859	5,700,000	5,550,000	
1860	6,049.424	5,750.000	
1861	6,100,000	5,885.000	
1862	6,200,000	5,755,000	
1863	6,300,000	5,850,000	
1864	6,300,000	6,150,000	3,540,000
1865	6,400,000	6,250,000	3,540,000
1866	5,934,638	6,275,000	
1867	6,228,575	6,228,575	4,784,001
1868	6,253,875	6,253,875	5,184,990
1869	6,137,043	6,537,650	
1870	6,339,310	6,339,315	5,521,650
1871	6,554,365	6,564,365	5,767,106
1872	6,334,798	6,336,795	
1873	6,715,333	6,715,733	6,464,689
1874	6,606,335	6,606,335	6,695,327

Sources: Reports of Inspectors of Mines, East and West Scotland 1856-74

Richard Meade The Coal and Iron Industries of the United Kingdom (London 1882) 274

Table 9: Deaths in West of Scotland Collieries 1853-74

	West	E/Lanarks	Total
1853			63
1854			
1855			56
1856	45	22	67
1857	41	14	55
1858	41	15	56
1859	47	13	60
1860	57	21	78
1861	37	30	67
1862	38	22	60
1863	32	26	58
1864	35	19	54
1865	54	30	84
1866	45	31	76
1867	35	34	69
1868	40	23	63
1869	39	36	75
1870	22	43	65
1871	51	42	93
1872	40	27	67
1873	49	43	92
1874	69	44	113

Sources: Reports of Mines Inspectors, West and East Scotland 1855-74

Table 10: Changes in the Death-Rate of Colliers in the West of Scotland 1853-71

	Number of Colliers	Production	Deaths	Rates of Deaths
1851	25,213			
1853	/25,600 app./		63	1 per 406 colliers
1861	27,000 app.		64.5 (average 1859-62)	1 " 415 "
1865		9,940,000 tons	68.2 (average 1863-7)	1 " 145,600 tons
1871	36,000 app.	12,321,471 tons	78.4 (average 1869-72)	1 " 461 colliers and 158,000 tons

Sources: Reports of Mines Inspectors West and East Scotland 1855-72

Census of Great Britain 1851 II (London 1854) 906-7

Census of Scotland 1861 II (London 1864) 219-56

Census of Scotland 1871 II (Edinburgh 1874) 344-87

Table 11: Productivity of Coal Miners of West of Scotland in Output per Man per Year 1861-74

	West Scotland (Using Inspector's figures)	West Scotland (Using Meade's figures)	East Lanarkshire	Scotland
1861	343.4 tons	329.7 tons		
1862	346.3 "	321.5 "		
1863	349.0 "	324.1 "		
1864	348.8 "	340.5 "	354.0 tons	323
1865				324
1866	296.0 "	313.0 "		292
1867		295.5	316.6 "	282
1868		295.5	345.4 "	293
1869		306.6		305
1870		322.5	382.4 "	317
1871		335.0		329
1872		307.0		303
1873		297.0		288
1874		292.0		278

Sources: Reports of Mines Inspectors, West and East Scotland 1861-74

Meade, Coal and Iron Industries of U.K. 274

Table 12: Miners' Output and Unpaid 'Increase' Resulting from Weighing System at Collieries Owned by Duke of Hamilton

Colliery	1841		1842		1843		1844		1849-50	
	Unpaid 'Increase'	Paid Output	Unpaid 'Increase'	Paid Output	Unpaid 'Increase'	Paid Output	Unpaid 'Increase'	Paid Output	Unpaid 'Increase'	Paid Ouput
Avonbanks	1,426 tons	13,565 tons	1,217 tons	11,582 tons	1,189 tons	12,125 tons	1,523 tons	13,356 tons	100 tons	20,928 tons
Quarter	1,257 "	7,516 "	1,005 "	5,777 "	599 "	7,665 "	629 "	7,025 "	435 "	5,963 "
Skellyton	86 "	2,619 "	57 "	2,526 "	59 "	3,081 "	97 "	2,604 "	-	-
Auchenheath	104 "	10,031 "	100 "	10,330 "	76 "	8,525 "	17 "	15,359 "	497 "	23,998 "
Netherburn	24 "	6,355 "	24 "	3,352 "	7 "	996 "	-	-	-	-
Cambuslang	nil entered	23,653 "	1,552 "	15,367 "	439 "	20,813 "	1,482 tons	15,748 "	3,251 "	36,247 "
Totals	2,897 tons	63,739 tons	3,955 tons	48,944 tons	2,369 tons	53,205 tons	3,748 tons	54,092 tons	4,183 tons	87,136 tons

Sources: Duke of Hamilton's Mineral Accounts, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844, 1849-50 Hamilton District Library, Local Collection

Table 13: Mines with Truck Stores 1866 in West of Scotland

	Owned by Ironmasters		Owned by Coalmasters		Total		Payment		
Ayrshire	Mines with Stores	No. Employed	Mines with Stores	No. Employed	Mines with Stores	No. Employed	Monthly	Fortnightly	Weekly
	8	3,230	3	530	11	3,760	5	4	2
Lanarkshire									
Glasgow Maryhill District	6	1,745	3	225	9	1,970	1	8	-
Baillieston District	-	-	4	440	4	440	-	4	-
Coatbridge District	5	2,750	1	100	6	2,850	3	3	-
Airdrie District	1	200	4	480	5	680	-	5	-
Holytown District	7	1,800	2	600	9	2,400	5	4	-
Wishaw District	2	150	7	660	9	810	2	7	-
Lesmahagow/Larkhall etc.	5	2,085	3	185	8	2,270	5	3	-
County Total	26	8,730	24	2,690	50	11,420	16	34	-
Renfrewshire	2	1,070	1	60	3	1,130	2	1	
Totals	36	13,030	28	3,280	64	16,310	23	39	2
Remainder of Scotland	6	3,100	5	730	11	3,830	6	5	-

Source: Manuscript tables in Bills and Papers, Parliamentary Papers 1869-71 G.U.L.

Table 14: Numbers of Miners in West of Scotland 1841-71

	1841	1851	1861	1871
Ayrshire	2,526 Coal 2,320 Iron 172 Unspec. 34	8,004 Coal 6,061 Iron 1,943 Unspec.	11,737 Coal 7,716 Iron 3,706 Unspec. 315	12,600 Coal 8,207 Iron 3,041 Unspec. 1,352
Lanarkshire	9,634 Coal 7,391 Iron 1,702 Unspec. 541	19,225 Coal 15,580 Iron 3,645 Unspec.	20,549 Coal 15,101 Iron 3,827 Unspec. 1,215 Owners) Managers) 406 Clerks)	26,456 Coal 22,663 Iron 2,594 Unspec. 1,199
Renfrewshire	925 Coal 910 Iron 6 Unspec. 9	965 Coal 790 Iron 175 Unspec.	1,799 Coal 610 Iron 1,065 Unspec. 124	1,593 Coal 433 Iron 733 Unspec. 427
Dunbartonshire	251 Coal 205 Iron 31 Unspec. 15	573 Coal 549 Iron 24 Unspec.	620 Coal 504 Iron 74 Unspec. 42	1,414 Coal 675 Iron 660 Unspec. 79
Stirlingshire	1,232 Coal 1,075 Iron 113 Unspec. 44	2,354 Coal 2,233 Iron 121 Unspec.	3,551 Coal 2,703 Iron 650 Unspec. 135 Owners) Managers) 63 Clerks)	4,582 Coal 3,783 Iron 786 Unspec. 13
Totals for Region	14,568 Coal 11,901 Iron 2,024 Unspec. 643	31,121 Coal 25,213 Iron 5,908 Unspec.	38,256 Coal 26,634 Iron 9,322 Unspec. 1,831 Owners) etc.) 469	46,645 Coal 35,731 Iron 7,814 Unspec. 3,070

Sources for Table 14: Census of Scotland 1841.

Occupational Abstract II (London 1844) 6-7,8-19, 52-3, 70-1, 79

Census of Great Britain 1851 II (London 1854) 906-7

Census of Scotland 1861 II (London 1864) 219, 225, 241, 248, 256

Census of Scotland 1871 II (Edinburgh 1874) 344-5, 350-1, 369, 377, 386-7

Table 15: Proportion of County Populations Born in Ireland

County	1861	1871
	Percentages of Irish-born Population	
Ayrshire	9.718	7.806
Lanarkshire	14.583	13.298
Dunbartonshire	11.912	10.469
Renfrewshire	14.795	14.428
Scotland	6.664	6.184

Sources: Census of Scotland 1861 II (London 1864) lxxiii, 331

Census of Scotland 1871 II (Edinburgh 1874) 181

Table 16: Comparative Growth of Irish Mining Population in Two Mining Villages

	Quarter		Holytown	
1841	Total Miners	43		108
	Irish Miners	4		3
	Proportion 1 in 10		Proportion 1 in 36	
1851	Total Miners	73		271
	Irish Miners	4		42
	Proportion 1 in 18		Proportion 1 in 6	
1861	Total Miners	86		254
	Irish Miners	16		48
	Proportion 1 in 5		Proportion 1 in 5	
1871	Total Miners	138		181
	Irish Miners	23		37
	Proportion 1 in 6		Proportion 1 in 5	

Sources: Census Records 1841 Enumerator's Returns for Hamilton Parish (647) district 20

and Bothwell Parish (625) districts 10, 12 and 19

Census 1851 Enumerator's Returns for Hamilton Parish (656) district 4

Bothwell Parish (625) dis-ricts 13, 19, 20

Census 1861 Enumerator's Returns for Hamilton Parish (647) district 25

Bothwell Parish (625^2) districts 1, 2, 10

Census 1871 Enumerator's Returns for Hamilton Parish (647) districts 5, 6

Bothwell Parish (625) districts 1, 2, 10

Table 17: Mining Community Friendly Societies Registered with Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies (Scotland)

	Rules Lodged 1829-52	Listed in Report 1874
Ayrshire	Ayr Colliery F.S. Dura Coal Cutters'F.S., Gargeston Coal cutters'F.S. Kilmarnock Coal cutters'Soc. Stevenston Colliers' F.S.	Cumnock Centenary F.S. Kilmarnock Union F.S. Woodhead F.S. Fergushill Colliery Funeral
Lanarkshire	Airdrie Colliers'F.S. Airdrie Miners'F.S. Ballochney Miners'& Coal-hewers'F.S. Carnbroe Colliery F.S. Woodhall Colliery F.S. Carfin Colliery F.S. Chapelhall Works F.S. Gartsherrie Coalhewers F.S. Westmuir,and Shettleston Youths, Colliers'and Miners'F.S. Rochsolloch Miners'F.S. Rosehall Colliery F.S. Rosehall F.S. of Coalminers Hallowglen Coal Miners'F.S. Whifflet Colliery F.S. Larkhall Alexander Lodge Free Miners F.S.	Airdrie Funeral F.S. Chapelhall F.S. Chapelhall Works F.S. Wishawtown Funeral F.S. Gartsherrie Coalhewers'F.S. Westmuir and Parkhead F.S. Thankerton Colliery F.S. Wishawtown F.S. Airdrie Working Miners' F.S. Mossend Iron Works F.S. Stonehouse Funeral So c. Quarter Iron Works F.S. Maryhill F.S. Larkhall Alexander Lodge of Free Miners Cadder Ironstone Works Green Colliery (Wishaw) Annual F.S. Wishaw Iron Works Miners Annual F.S. Faskine F.S. Stevenson Coalhewers'F.S. Holytown New F.S. Clelland F.S.
Renfrewshire	Cowglen and Titwood Coalhewers'F.S.	Cowglen and Titwood Coalhewers'F.S.

Sources: Records of Assistant Registrar of Friendly Societies (Scotland),

Friendly Societies 1829-52 SRO, Register House, FS 1/16, FS 2, FS 7, FS 21

Reports of Registrar of Friendly Societies (Scotland) 1874 (London 1875) 4-12

Table 18: Examples of Church Membership in Mining Communities

Church	Year	No. of Miners on Communicants' Roll	Total Communicants
Wishaw Old C of S	1852-6	85	547
New Monkland C of S	1855	1	575
" " " " "	1874	1	464
Dalmellington C of S	1857	11	469
Hamilton Parish C of S	1861	4	577
Auchingramont C of S (Hamilton)	1864	1	190
Quarter C of S	1881	50	186
Holytown Free Church	1845	49	232
Carsphairn and Dalmellington Free Church	1846	49	180
St. John's Free (Hamilton)	1862	4	402
Graham Street Reformed, Airdrie(Free Church)	1865	14	114

Sources: Wishaw Old Parish Church, Communion Roll 1852-6 SRO, Register House, CH 2/579/3

New Monkland Parish Church, Communicants' Roll Book 1858-74 SRO, CH 2/685/8

Dalmellington Parish Church, Communicants' Roll Book 1857 SRO, CH 2/85/14

Hamilton Parish Church, Communion Roll 1838-64 Parish Church Office, Hamilton

Auchingramont Church, Communion Roll 1861-5 Parish Church Office, Hamilton

Quarter Church, Communicants' Roll Book 1881, manse of Quarter

Holytown Free Church, Communicants'Roll Book 1845-90 SRO, CH 3/478/14

Sources for Table 18 (Cont'd)

Carsphairn and Dalmellington Free Church, Communicants' Roll Book, SRO CH 3/777/6

St. John's Free Church, Hamilton, Communicants' Roll Book 1862, SRO CH 3/680/7

Graham Street Reformed Presbyterian Church Airdrie Communion Roll 1863 SRO CH 3/384/7

Table 19: District Organisations of Scottish Miners' Union in West Central Scotland December 1862

District	Union Membership	Sum in Bank
Hurlford, Kilmarnock and Galston	1,300	£ 94
Dreghorn	200	£ 27
Johnstone	140	£ 12
Paisley	180	£ 5
Glasgow	1,000	each pit banks its own money
Jordanhill	60	£ 14
Govan	273	£ 35
Nitshill	36	£ 3
Springfield and Huntershill	300	
Balornock	79	£ 10
Kenmure No. 9	20	£ 2
Keppoch No. 16	30	
Baillieston	560	£ 12
Holytown	500	on strike - money exhausted
Wishaw	700	over £200
Larkhall	400	£ 75
Hamilton	150	£ 16
Total	5,928	£505

Sources: Hamilton Advertiser 20 December 1862

Arnot Scottish Miners 46

Table 20: Membership of Seven District Miners' Unions 1872-3

District	Estimated Membership Aug. 1872	Nov. 1872	May 1873	Nov. 1873	Percentage Change from Dec. 1862 (Table 19)
Maryhill	1,480	1,500	1,500	1,800	+ 350%
Baillieston	650	800			+ 43%
Holytown		500			nil
Wishaw			1,060	1,500	+ 114%
Larkhall	1,100	1,100	2,000	2,000	+ 400%
Dalry				720	+ 400%
Den				330	

Sources: Hamilton Advertiser 31 August, 19 October, 2, 9 November 1872

Minutes of Conference of Miners' National Association, Glasgow 20-23 May 1873 (Durham 1873) 1-3

Proceedings of Conference of Miners' National Association, Leeds, 18-22 November 1873 (Glasgow 1874) 17

Table 21: Entry Fees and Subscriptions for Miners Unions in West Central Scotland 1824-75

Union	Date of Rules	Entry Fee	Subscription
Ayrshire Miners	1824	1s	nil
Miners' Association	1843	6d	1d per week
Scottish Miners	1855	6d	1d per week
Glasgow Miners	1857	nil	1½d per week
Scottish Miners	1862	nil	3 d per week
Airdrie Miners	1862	1s	2d per week
Scottish Miners	1866	1s	3d per week
Miners' National Association	1867	nil	1d per month
Wishaw Miners	1873	2s 6d	3d per week
Motherwell Miners	1873	2s 6d	3d per week
Carluke Miners	1873	10s	4d per week
Larkhall Miners	1874	5s	3½d per week
Hamilton Miners	1874	5s	3½d per week
Stonehouse Miners	1875	5s	3½d per week
Maryhill Miners	1875	10s	4d per week

Sources: Report of Select Committee on Combination Laws 1825 (437) 55 article 3
Rules and Regulations of Miners Association of Great Britain and Ireland (Newcastle 1843) VII
Glasgow Sentinel 13 October 1855, article III
Glasgow Sentinel 19 September 1857, article 3
Airdrie Advertiser 11 October1862
Glasgow Sentinel 12 May, 2 June 1866
General Rules for Miners' National Association (Durham 1867) XI and XIV Rules of Wishaw Miners Union 1873 in Friendly Society Records, SRO, FS 7/35 rule 6
Rules of Motherwell Miners' Union 1873 FS 7/43 rule 6
Rules of Carluke Miners' Union 1873 FS 7/39 rule 5
Rules of Larkhall Miners' Union 1874 FS 7/1 rule 6
Rules of Hamilton Miners' Union 1874 FS 7/12 rule 6
Rules of Stonehouse Miners' Union 1875 FS 7/34 rule 6
Rules of Maryhill Miners' Union 1875 FS 7/23 rule 4 all in Friendly Society Records, SRO, Register House

Table 22: Miners' Strikes Which Involved Several Districts of West of Scotland 1842-74

(Category 1)

Year	Months	Length	Districts Involved	Estimated No. of Strikers
1842	Aug.-Nov.	c 10 weeks	Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown, Glasgow, Dalry, Kilmarnock, Ayr, Barrhead	c 12,000
1843	Jan.-Feb.	c 3 weeks	Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown	
1844	June-Aug.	c 12 weeks	Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown, Glasgow	875
1847	July-Sept.	c 12 weeks	Airdrie, Coatbridge, Dalry	
1850	March-July	c 15 weeks	Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown Glasgow, Dalry, Kilmarnock, Stirlingshire	c 10,000-12,000
1855	September	2 weeks	Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown, Wishaw	
1856	March-June	c 14 weeks	Airdrie, Coatbridge, Baillieston Holytown, Wishaw, Glasgow, Maryhill, Cumnock, Dalry, Kilmarnock, Pollokshaws, Johnstone	c 15,000
1860	Jan.-March	c 10 weeks	Bishopbriggs, Govan, Coatbridge Holytown, Johnstone	c 900
1866	Aug.-Sept.	4-5 weeks	Hamilton, Larkhall, Wishaw	c 1,800
1867	June-Aug.	c 11 weeks (2 weeks for locked out mines)	Wishaw (strike), Hamilton, Larkhall, Motherwell (locked out)	
1874	March	c 12 weeks	Maryhill, Glasgow, Airdrie, Coatbridge, Holytown, Hamilton, Wishaw, Motherwell, Larkhall, Kilmarnock, Dalry.	

Table 23: Miners' Strikes Which Involved One District in West Central Scotland 1854-74

(Category 2)

Year	Month	Length	District
1854			Airdrie
1861	November		Kilmarnock
1863	March-April		Hamilton - Larkhall
1867	May	2 weeks	Larkhall
1870	July-Sept.	7 weeks	Airdrie
1872	July		Hamilton

Table 24: Miners' Strikes Which Involved Two, Three or Four Mines in West Central Scotland 1854-74

(Category 3)

Year	Number of Strikes	Districts
1858	1	Airdrie
1859	1	Larkhall
1862	4	Glasgow, Holytown, Kilmarnock
1863	2	Johnstone, Glasgow
1864	1	Glasgow
1865	1	Kilmarnock
1866	5	Cambuslang, Kilmarnock, Hamilton, Wishaw and Airdrie
1867	4	Motherwell, Hamilton, Kilmarnock, Wishaw
1868	2	Wishaw, Kilmarnock
1870	1	Kilmarnock
1872	1	Motherwell
1873	1	Larkhall

Table 25: Miners' Strikes in Single Mines in West Central Scotland 1854-74

(Category 4)

Year	Number of Strikes	Districts
1855	3	Kilmarnock (2), Muirkirk
1856	2	Dalry, Glasgow
1857	3	Dalry, Carluke, Hamilton
1858	2	Nitshill, Wishaw
1859	5	Glasgow, Wishaw (3), Larkhall
1861	7	Larkhall, Hamilton, Cambuslang (2), Pollokshaws, Wishaw, Baillieston
1862	15	Larkhall, Dalry, Maryhill (3), Glasgow (2), Baillieston (3), Cambuslang, Hamilton, Wishaw, Coatbridge (2).
1863	8	Paisley, Wishaw, Kilmarnock, Hamilton, Maryhill (2), Ayr, Johnstone
1864	6	Kilmarnock, Hamilton (2), Glasgow (2), Holytown
1865	3	Dalry, Glasgow, Kilmarnock
1866	10	Glasgow (3), Holytown, Hamilton, Ayr, Coatbridge, Wishaw, Stonehouse, Kilmarnock
1867	7	Wishaw (2), Glasgow, Hamilton (2), Larkhall, Motherwell
1868	7	Kilmarnock, Holytown, Wishaw Glasgow, Maryhill (2), Hamilton
1869	7	Motherwell (2), Hamilton (2), Coatbridge, Wishaw, Cambuslang
1870	3	Motherwell (2), Coatbridge
1871	2	Douglas, Glasgow
1872	4	Johnstone, Kilmarnock, Motherwell, Maryhill
1873	3	Wishaw, Glasgow, Airdrie

Table 26: Summary of All Types of Miners' Strikes in West of Scotland 1854-74

Year	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
1854		1		
1855	1			3
1856	1			2
1857				3
1858			1	2
1859			1	5
1860	1			
1861		1		7
1862			4	15
1863		1	2	8
1864			1	6
1865			1	3
1866	1		5	10
1867	1	1	4	7
1868			2	7
1869				7
1870		1	1	3
1871				2
1872		1	1	4
1873			1	3
1874	1			
Totals	6	6	24	97

Table 27: Causes of Major Strikes of Miners in West Central Scotland 1842-74

Wage Demand Refused By Employers	Wage Cut Opposed By Miners
1842	
1843	
1844	
	1847
1850	
1855	
	1856
1860	
1861	
	1863
	1866
1867	1867
1870	
1872	
	1874

Table 28: Causes of Lesser Strikes of Miners in West Central Scotland 1854-74

Year	Numbers of Strikes Caused by				
	Wage Rise Demands Refused	Wage Cuts Opposed	Other Causes	Unknown	
1854					
1855	2	1			
1856		1	1		
1857		1	2		
1858	1	1	1		
1859	4		1	1	
1860					
1861	3	3	1		
1862	17		2		
1863	3	5	1	1	
1864	6		1		
1865		2		2	
1866	8	4	2	1	
1867	6	5			
1868	6	2		1	
1869	3		3	1	
1870	4				
1871	1				
1872	4		2		
1873			2	1	
1874					
Totals	68	25	19	9	

Table 29: Incidence of Miners' Strikes Shown District by District in the West of Scotland 1842-74
(Category A - Major strikes of more than four mines: Category B - Lesser strikes of 1-4 mines)

	Ayr & Dalmellington		Dalry		Kilmarnock & Cumnock		Renfrewshire		Glasgow & Rutherglen		
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	
1842	1		1		1		1		1		1842
1843											1843
1844									1		1844
1845											1845
1846											1846
1847			1		1						1847
1848											1848
1849											1849
1850			1		1				1	1	1850
1851											1851
1852				1							1852
1853										1	1853
1854											1854
1855					3						1855
1856			1	1	1		1		1	1	1856
1857				1							1857
1858								1			1858
1859										1	1859
1860							1		1		1860
1861					1			1		3	1861
1862				1		2			1	4	1862
1863		1				1		3		3	1863
1864						1				2	1864
1865				1		1				1	1865
1866		1				2				4	1866
1867						1				1	1867
1868						2				3	1868
1869											1869
1870						1					1870
1871										1	1871
1872						1		1		1	1872
1873										1	1873
1874			1		1				1		1874

Table 29: (Cont'd)

	Airdrie & Coatbridge		Holytown		Wishaw & Motherwell		Hamilton Larkhall etc.		
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	
1842	1		1						1842
1843	1		1						1843
1844	1		1						1844
1845									1845
1846									1846
1847	1								1847
1848									1848
1849									1849
1850	1		1						1850
1851									1851
1852								1	1852
1853									1853
1854	1								1854
1855	1		1		1				1855
1856	1		1		1				1856
1857						1		1	1857
1858		1				1			1858
1859						3		2	1859
1860		1	1						1860
1861						1		2	1861
1862		2		2		1		2	1862
1863				1		1		3	1863
1864				1				2	1864
1865									1865
1866		2		1		3	1	2	1866
1867						7	1	3	1867
1868				1		3			1868
1869		1				3		2	1869
1870	1	1				2			1870
1871								1	1871
1872						3		2	1872
1873		1				1			1873
1874	1		1		1		1		1874

Table 30: The Successes and Failures of Major Strikes 1842-74

	Successes	Failures
Strikes Pressing Wage Rises	4½	2½
Strikes Opposing Wage Cuts	1	5
Totals	5½	7½

(The ½ strike referred to in two columns was in 1850 which succeeded in Lanarkshire and failed in Ayrshire.)

Table 31: The Successes and Failures of Lesser Strikes 1855-74

	Successes	Failures
Strikes Pressing Wage Rises	27	10
Strikes Opposing Wage Cuts	5	10
Other Demands	5	-
Totals	37	20

Sources for Tables 22-31:

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Supplementary, detailed source references for strikes referred to in Tables 22-31 are contained in a pocket on the back cover of this thesis.

Table 32: Principal Instances of Restricted Working by West of Scotland Miners 1842-74

Year	Action	District
1842	Weekly idle day	Coatbridge
1843	Discussing reduced darg	Holytown, Airdrie,Coatbridge
1844	Reduced darg	Several Lanarkshire and Ayrshire
1845	Reduced darg	districts
1846		
1847	Reduced darg 26-29 cwt.	Several Lanarkshire districts
1848	Reduced darg	Several districts
1849	Reduced darg	Several districts
1850		
1851		
1852	Reduced darg	Several Lanarkshire districts
1853		
1854	Frequently reduced darg as wages rise	Several Lanarkshire districts
1855	Reduced darg discussed	Holytown
1856		
1857		
1858		
1859		
1860		
1861	Reduced darg	Several Lanarkshire/Ayrshire districts and Renfrewshire
1862		
1863	Reduced darg and frequent idle days	Hurlford, Galston and Kilmarnock
1864	Reduced darg and 8-hour day agreed	Several Clyde Valley districts

Table 32: (Cont'd)

1865	(no evidence of further action after 1864 agreement)	
1866	Reduced darg and 8-hour day	Widespread in Clyde Valley
1867		
1868	Reduced darg and short hours	Wishaw, Airdrie and many other districts
1869	(Policies declined at end of 1868)	
1870	8-hour day and regular idle day and reduced darg	Middle Ward of Lanarkshire
1871	8-hour day	Ayrshire districts
1872	Reduced darg and 8-hour day	Glasgow, spreading to other districts
1873		
1874	Reduced darg and 8-hour day	Airdrie, Wishaw, Motherwell

Sources: Northern Star 12 March 1842, 14 September 1843, 25 January 22 February 1845

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Trade union records are arranged basically in chronological order and in categories of national miners' unions, local miners' unions, trades councils and other unions. Friendly society records, however, are arranged in chronological order.

In addition to the basic primary sources, manuscript and printed, a category of Contemporary Publications is included, quite separate from secondary books. This is because the works by men like Alison, Bremner, Barrowman and Cloughan are essentially primary sources of information and must therefore be distinguished from the historical works in the secondary category.

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	G.A. 4, 22 August, 10 October 1842
	G.S.P. 20 August, 3 September 1842
1843 :	G.A. 23, 30 January 1843

Year		Sources
	N.S.	11 February 1843
1844 :	G.A.	17 June 1844
	M.A.	24 August 1844
	N.S.	22 June 1844
1847 :	G.A.	19 July, 16 August, 20 September 1847
	N.S.	9 August 1847
1850 :	G.C.	9 April, 2 May, 20 June, 20 July 1850
1855 :	G.S.	15, 22 September 1855
	A.A.	8, 22, 29 September 1855
1856 :	L.A.	Strike Letters 1856, SRO, West Register House
	G.S.	29 March, 12, 26 April, 3, 17 May 1856
1860 :	H.O.	Scot. 1860 vol. 243, SRO, Register House
	G.S.	25 February, 10 March 1860
	H.A.	4, 11 February, 24 March 1860
1866 :	A.A.	1 September 1866
	H.A.	11, 18 August, 18, 25 September 1866
1867 :	H.A.	22 June, 20 July, 10 August 1867
1874 :	G.H.	18 March 1874

2. Strikes which Involved One District (Category 2)

Year	District		Sources
1854 :	Airdrie	:	David Bremner The Industries of Scotland (Edinburgh 1869) 20
1861 :	Kilmarnock	:	C.G. 23 November 1861
1863 :	Hamilton-Larkhall	:	H.A. 7, 14, 21, 28 March, 11 April 1863
			C.G. 7 March 1863
			The Miner 21 March 1863
1867 :	Larkhall	:	H.A. 25 May 1867
1870 :	Airdrie	:	H.A. 6, 13, 20 August, 10 September 1870

Year	District	Sources
1872	Hamilton	H.A. 20 July 1872

3. Strikes which Involved Two, Three or Four Mines

Year	District	Sources
1858	Airdrie	H.A. 18 December 1858
1859	Larkhall	H.A. 27 August 1859'
1862	Glasgow	C.G. 26 July, 2 August 1862
	Holytown	H.A. 13 December 1862
	Kilmarnock	C.G. 27 December 1862
1863	Johnstone	C.G. 13 June, 4, 11, 18 July 1863
	Glasgow	C.G. 13 June, 4 July 1863
1864	Glasgow	H.A. 17 September, 29 October 1864
1865	Kilmarnock	K.S. 20 May 1865
1866	Cambuslang	H.A. 3 March 1866
	Kilmarnock	K.S. 5, 12 May 1866
	Hamilton	H.A. 14,21,28 July 1866
	Wishaw	H.A. 28 July 1866
	Airdrie	A.A. 15 September 1866
1867	Motherwell	H.A. 16 February 1867
	Hamilton	H.A. 8 June 1867
	Kilmarnock	K.S. 26 October 1867
	Wishaw	H.A. 16 November 1867
1868	Wishaw	H.A. 18 July, 8, 15, 22 August 1868
	Kilmarnock	K.S. 22 August 1868
1870	Kilmarnock	K.S. 17 September 1870
1872	Motherwell	H.A. 27 July 1872
1873	Larkhall	G.A. 18 February 1873

4. Strikes which Involved Single Mines

Year	District	Sources
1855	Kilmarnock	G.S. 7, 14 April 1855

Year	District	Sources
1855 :	Kilmarnock :	G.S. 20 October 1855
	Muirkirk :	A.A. 13 October 1855
1856 :	Dalry :	G.S. 13, 27 September 1856
	Glasgow :	G.S. 13 December 1856
1857 :	Dalry :	G.S. 28 February 1857
	Carluke :	G.S. 5 September 1857
	Hamilton :	H.A. 14 November 1857
1858 :	Nitshill :	H.A. 15 May 1858
	Wishaw :	H.A. 11 December 1858
1859 :	Glasgow :	H.A. 24 September 1859
	Wishaw :	H.A. 10 September 1859
	Wishaw :	H.A. 1 October 1859
	Wishaw :	H.A. 19, 26 November 1859
	Larkhall :	H.A. 15 October 1859
1861 :	Larkhall :	C.G. 12 October 1861
	Hamilton :	H.A. 27 April 1861
	Cambuslang :	H.A. 13 April 1861
	Cambuslang :	H.A. 3 August 1861
	Pollokshaws :	H.A. 22 June, 6 July 1861
	Wishaw :	C.G. 2, 9 February 1861
	Baillieston :	C.G. 20 July 1861
1862 :	Larkhall :	H.A. 5, 12, 19, 26 April 1862
	:	G.S. 5 April 1862
	Dalry :	C.G. 28 June, 12, 19 July 1862
	Maryhill :	C.G. 26 July, 2 August 1862
	Maryhill :	C.G. 11, 25 October 1862
	Maryhill :	H.A. 8 November 1862
	Glasgow :	C.G. 31 May, 21 June 1862

Year	District	Sources
1862	Glasgow	C.G. 6, 13 September 1862
	Baillieston	C.G. 3 May 1862
	Baillieston	C.G. 12 July 1862
	Baillieston	H.A. 16 August 1862
	Cambuslang	H.A. 24 May 1862
	Hamilton	C.G. 9, 16, 23 August 1862
	Wishaw	H.A. 17, 25, 31 May 1862
	Coatbridge	C.G. 13 September 1862
	Coatbridge	C.G. 18 October 1862
1863	Paisley	H.A. 14, 21, 28 February 1863
	Wishaw	H.A. 7, 14, 21, 28 March 1863
		The Miner 7, 14, March 1863
	Kilmarnock	C.G. 25 April, 13 June 1863
	Hamilton	H.A. 4 July 1863
	Maryhill	C.G. 25 July 1863
	Maryhill	H.A. 3, 10 October 1863
		Miner and Workman's Advocate 24 October 1863
	Ayr	Miner and Workman's Advocate 24 October 1863
	Johnstone	H.A. 10 October 1863
1864	Kilmarnock	C.G. 9 January 1864
	Hamilton	C.G. 30 January 1864
	Glasgow	C.G. 30 January 1864
		C.G. 1 October 1864
	Holytown	H.A. 24 September 1864
1865	Dalry	H.A. 20 May 1865
	Glasgow	H.A. 12, 19, 26 August 1865
	Kilmarnock	H.A. 11 November 1865
1866	Glasgow	H.A. 27 January 1866

Year	District	Sources
1866	Glasgow	H.A. 3, 10, 17 February 1866
	Glasgow	C.G. 21 July 1866
	Holytown	H.A. 10 February 1866
	Hamilton	H.A. 3 March 1866
	Ayr	H.A. 12 May 1866
	Coatbridge	A.A. 26 May 1866
	Wishaw	H.A. 15 September 1866
	Stonehouse	H.A. 4 August 1866
	Kilmarnock	H.A. 1 September 1866
1867	Wishaw	H.A. 16 February 1867
	Wishaw	H.A. 14 September 1867
	Glasgow	H.A. 30 March 1867
	Hamilton	H.A. 22 June 1867
	Hamilton	H.A. 14 December 1867
	Larkhall	H.A. 21 December 1867
	Motherwell	H.A. 21 December 1867
1868	Kilmarnock	K.S. 18 January 1868
	Holytown	H.A. 18 July 1868
	Wishaw	H.A. 17 October 1868
	Glasgow	H.A. 18 August 1868
	Maryhill	H.A. 11 April 1868
	Maryhill	H.A. 24 October 1868
	Hamilton	H.A. 25 April 1868
1869	Motherwell	H.A. 6 February 1869
	Motherwell	H.A. 24 July 1869
	Hamilton	H.A. 6 February 1869
	Hamilton	H.A. 8 May 1869
	Coatbridge	H.A. 17 April 1869

Year	District	Sources
1869	Wishaw	H.A. 29 May 1869
	Cambuslang	H.A. 18 September 1869
1870	Motherwell	B-H 16 July 1870
	Motherwell	H.A. 23 July 1870
	Coatbridge	H.A. 23 July 1870
1871	Douglas	H.A. 16 September 1871
	Glasgow	H.A. 27 May 1871
1872	Johnstone	G.S. 13 January 1872
	Kilmarnock	H.A. 31 August 1872
	Motherwell	H.A. 21 September 1872
	Maryhill	G.S. 10 March 1872
1873	Wishaw	G.H. 26 February 1873
	Glasgow	G.H. 18 November 1873
	Airdrie	G.H. 18 November 1873